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A Reformed Weekly

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Catch the Y2K bug of compassion

Jubilee 2000 is a global campaign which started in England and involves many Christians and churches. It aims to lift the burden of unpayable debt from the world's poorest countries.

The campaign seeks to collect 22 million signatures from people around the world and, based on the biblical concept of jubilee, calls for debt cancellation, and to present these petitions to leaders of the world's eight largest economies (the G-8 nations) when they meet in Cologne, Germany, in June 1999.

In this issue we probe the serious matter of debt on the part of the poorest nations, taking Uganda as a case study. We hope that our presentation will stir not only debates but hearts as well. **Editor**

Jubilee 2000
UGANDA DEBT CAMPAIGN
LAUNCH OCT. 30TH '98
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER
END THE DEBT BURDEN OF POOR COUNTRIES BY THE YEAR 2000
UGANDAN DEBT NETWORK

The launching of the Jubilee 2000 Uganda campaign, in Kampala, Uganda, October 30, 1998.

Canadian, American CRC leaders split over Jubilee 2000

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. – While Canadian leaders of the Christian Reformed Church are very supportive of the Jubilee 2000 campaign, some of their American counterparts question the program's effectiveness and don't want this year's synod to officially endorse it.

One of the key points of disagreement among CRC leaders is the idea of forgiving the debts of developing countries. The central idea of Jubilee 2000 is for Christians to appeal to governments, banks and corporations to cancel or reduce the debts of the 50 poorest countries in the world. Jubilee 2000 organizers see this program as being a modern-day equivalent of the biblical concept of Jubilee outlined in Leviticus 25.

"When you talk about money, you hit a lot of hot buttons," acknowledges Peter Vandermeulen, co-ordinator for social justice and hunger action for the CRC in North America. He is a member of the Co-ordinating Council for Church in Society (CCCiS), which met last fall to discuss whether or not to support Jubilee 2000.

Critical of program

Although some members of the council wanted to fully endorse the program, Vandermeulen says "The council stopped short of endorsing Jubilee 2000" and instead endorsed only the campaign's goals. He adds, "Many people on the council were disconcerted because the council did not endorse the program."

But, Vandermeulen says, "consensus was reached" on the following points:

- Crushing international debt very much affects the poor and, for Christians, is a serious matter indeed;
- That Jubilee 2000 be used as an opportunity to ask the CRC synod to speak strongly and clearly to the problem of poverty and debt through a resolution brought to the Synod 1999;
- The boards and agencies of the CRC should be encouraged to present issues of indebtedness to their constituency, using educational materials produced by or derived from Jubilee 2000.

Vandermeulen acknowledges that the Council of CRCs in Canada (CCRCC) has "gone much further" than CCCiS in endorsing Jubilee 2000. "From where I sit, I applaud that," he asserts.

Asked why Canadian and American CRC leaders have taken different stands on the issue, Vandermeulen says, "I think our Canadian leadership is less enamoured with a free enterprise solution." This may be because

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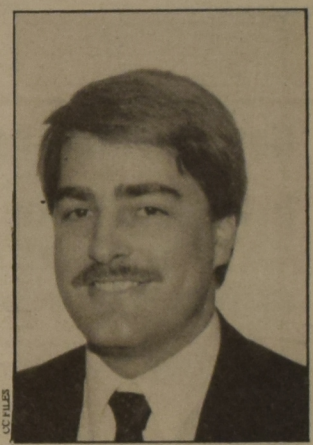

Rev. David Feddes

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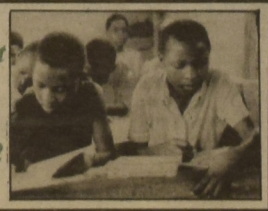

Did Jesus call only for a spiritual jubilee? George Vandervelde on Luke 4 ..... p. 14

News

Sin, corruption make poverty complex, says Feddes

... continued from page 1

they are more comfortable with "socialism." But the American CRC leadership is more interested in free-market solutions to problems, says Vandermeulen. There is "significant concern" among American CRC donors, business and academic people "about the signals you send when you start forgiving debts."

"I am against *unilateral* debt forgiveness," he asserts. Instead, he would prefer the major creditor countries, such as the U.S. and Canada, to work together for debt forgiveness. "Like Jubilee 2000 is advocating, we need an international consensus to do this," says Vandermeulen.

Bankers the bad guys?

Rev. David Feddes, minister of English Broadcasting and Listener Contact with the Back to God Hour, is a member of CCCiS who opposed endorsing Jubilee 2000. "I certainly share the opinion that international debt is a crushing problem," says Feddes. But he opposed the CRC synod's endorsing of the initiative partly because, "I'm very leery of preachers turning into political policy makers."

Feddes sees Jubilee 2000 as taking an unbalanced, "left-wingish" approach, which he believes involves "setting up bankers as bad guys and multinationals as really rotten.... It might not be effective to demonize [bankers] and ask those 'demons' to behave."

CC FILES

John Bolt

Feddes believes Third World debt is due to factors such as "exploitative business" and "some very corrupt millionaires and billionaires running [developing] countries." To solve the debt problem, "the political situation would need to be addressed along with the economic one," asserts Feddes.

"When you forgive the debts of [a] government, do you help that government's people? That question would need to be addressed."

Feddes also questions the connection between Jubilee 2000 and the biblical concept of Jubilee. He criticizes the Canadian organizers of the Jubilee initiative for their brochure ("A New Beginning: A Call for Jubilee") which states that Jesus emphasized the importance of the forgiveness of debt.

Feddes says, "They try to make it sound as though Jesus were making an economic statement."

The sin aspects

Poverty is more complex than Jubilee 2000 organizers think, he adds, and they have failed to recognize "the sin aspects of poverty. Sometimes the victim needs to be blamed," Feddes asserts.

But Feddes agrees with sending a petition to G-8 leaders about Jubilee 2000, because key decision-makers need to be influenced in order for changes to happen.

John Bolt, professor of systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich., was another member of CCCiS who opposed the CRC's endorsing of Jubilee 2000. "This is a moral issue the church should be aware of and call attention to," he says. But "there are so many unknown questions there. The church should not get on the bandwagon without having those issues fully explored.... I'm not convinced the poor would actually by helped by this." A better solution, he thinks, would be to teach stewardship and basic agriculture to people in developing countries.

Challenging the view of Jubilee 2000 organizers on Jesus' opinion of "jubilee," Bolt says. "Jesus is the one who fulfils this. He becomes the one who is the forgiver and the one whose sacrifice makes forgiveness and jubilee possible."

The bi-national board of trustees of the CRC will not be dealing directly with the Jubilee initiative, says Susan Van Lopik, who works with the bi-national staff of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC).

Instead, the CRC's standing Ministry Co-ordinating Committee has issued a statement which encourages the co-ordinator for social justice and hunger action, in collaboration with CRC agencies and institutions, to engage in a program of "awareness raising" and education (including developing educational materials within the CRC.)

Pray for Jubilee 2000

Ray Elgersma, Canadian Ministries director of the Council of CRCs in Canada (CCRCC), reports that he and the council have endorsed Jubilee 2000. Late last year, Elgersma sent a mailing to all members of Canadian CRCs and another to all Canadian CRC deacons explaining the Jubilee initiative and urging involvement with it. In his letter to deacons Elgersma wrote, "I would ask that you make yourself familiar with the Jubilee 2000 initiative, participate in it, and pray for its success.... We want to take seriously the Old Testament notion of Jubilee!"

Elgersma agrees with Vandermeulen that Canadian CRC leaders support the initiative more than Americans because "we are a more socialist country." In the U.S., "there is a free enterprise spirit that doesn't favor forgiveness of debt."

A God of justice

Unlike Feddes, Elgersma sees a connection between Jubilee 2000 and the biblical Jubilee. The intent of the Jubilee mentioned in Leviticus 25 was to bring justice to the poor – the same intent as the modern Jubilee. The biblical concept is "certainly an inspiration to us," says Elgersma. "It's a reminder that God is a God of justice.... Jubilee 2000 is a call to justice."

Elgersma contends that some people "sit with no food on their tables often through no fault of their own.... Many countries have fallen into debt because of natural disasters." He gives the example of Honduras, which was hard-hit by Hurricane Mitch recently. "That country has been set back 10 years with its infrastructure," he asserts.

Although the CRC synod will not officially endorse Jubilee 2000, individual churches may overture synod about it. First CRC in Toronto plans to do so, says its pastor, Ruth Hofman. The overture "asks that our churches join the effort," says Hofman. "In essence, it asks the churches to consider the initiative for debt reduction."

Peter Noteboom is one member of First CRC who has taken an active role in the Jubilee initiative. Starting this month, he will be leading an adult education class at the church, focusing on the initiative. He is also co-ordinator of the CCRCC's Jubilee effort.

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EFC unable to approve Jubilee 2000

Alan Doerksen

MARKHAM, Ont. – Although some leaders of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) support the concept of Jubilee 2000, EFC has decided not to officially approve the initiative because of the diversity of its membership.

"The position of the EFC has been overpowered by our organizational life," explains EFC president Gary Walsh. EFC's social action committee studied the initiative but decided not to give official approval to it because EFC consists of more than 30 denominations and other para-church groups, some of which have not yet discussed Jubilee 2000.

Walsh says he is saddened by the organizational dilemma, but notes that EFC has informally commended the program to churches.

"I'm very encouraged by Jubilee 2000.... I thank the Lord there is this emerging impetus and pray it will be effective for poverty-stricken nations and a witness for the Lord," says Walsh. "I view Jubilee 2000 very pragmatically. I value its intentions and its spirit." But Walsh puts less emphasis on the initiative's connection with the Biblical concept of Jubilee.

Jubilee curriculum possible

Two other groups that are considering involvement in the Jubilee 2000 initiative are the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) and the Ontario Christian School Teacher's Association (OCSTA). Jim Vreugdenhil, director of elementary education for OACS, is working on a proposal for a school curriculum related to Jubilee 2000. "It has to be fleshed out," explains Vreugdenhil. In late January, he will meet with Henk Hultink, executive director of OCSTA, with members of Citizens for Public Justice and OACS's education committee to discuss possibilities.

"I think the Biblical concept of Jubilee is a significant one," says Vreugdenhil.

Hultink adds, "OCSTA has in principle agreed to be supportive of the concept."

Chinese priest subjected to torture in 'special unit'

VATICAN CITY (KNS) – Catholic priest Fr. Li Qinghua has been arrested and subjected to "severe interrogation and physical and psychological torture," according to a report sent to *Fides* by priests who have suffered similarly in China. The story, published on Jan. 4, 1999, by the Vatican's missionary agency news service, explained that this torture includes using prostitutes who pose as cleaning women in the cells.

They are videotaped trying to compromise the priests. If the priest is slow to reject the woman, as she tries to embrace or kiss him, "the picture taken by the [hidden] video camera gives the idea that you have gone along," reports another priest who has been forced into similar circumstances. These tapes are then used to blackmail the priest into "admitting his connection with other underground priests and force him to join the Patriotic Association."

Such determination to compromise priests and nuns is not new in China. During the Cultural Revolution priests and nuns were obliged to marry. Even earlier, Chinese emperors sent girls to compromise Buddhist monks. In the past few years the use of prostitutes has been revived. *Fides* reports that police and prostitutes bring clergy to karaoke bars and discos and then "make them slip defenceless into their arms."

In June 1996, the communist authorities forced all Catholic nuns in Quankunin to enrol in a pre-marital class in an attempt to induce them to marry. Reportedly, agents "took the opportunity to abuse them."

In August 1996, authorities arranged for dancing girls to seduce detained priests and nuns who had been taken to a dancing hall. Photographs secretly taken were used as propaganda in an attempt to destroy their reputation.

Fr. Li is not an elderly priest who has undergone decades of oppression. Now aged 31, he was ordained a priest for the diocese of Yixian (Hebei province) in 1993. Since 1997 he had been working in Guan county. However, at 1 a.m. on Nov. 15, 1998, four police cars arrived at a Catholic person's house in Weizhuang, where the police arrested Fr. Li, confiscated religious books, videos for catechesis and other personal items.

Romanian Christians build bridges and apply their faith

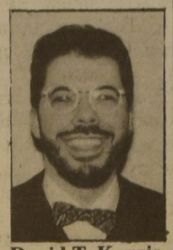
TIMISOARA, Romania (KNS) – In an effort to stimulate Christians to take responsibility for their culture, the Areopagus Centre for Christian Studies and Contemporary Culture in Timisoara invited Christians from different denominations and professions to a forum last summer.

Areopagus staff invited speakers to introduce a topic such as secularization or immoral public policy. Participants then reflected, studied and discussed how one could form a "biblical perspective" on the issue. In nourishing an ethos of "engagement, responsibility and involvement from the position of Christian servanthood" Romanian and British staff hope members will begin to seek solutions founded on "God's character and revelation."

Autumn courses offered at the Areopagus in 1998 included "Hermeneutics and Biblical Interpretation" and "The Human Being: A Theological Inquiry."

Stuck with a form of aristocracy?

Principalities & Powers



David T. Koyzis

Throughout history many have been attracted to direct democracy as a form of government. In a direct democracy, the citizens assemble together to vote directly on the issues of the day and can thereby be said to govern themselves. But because it is impractical to bring together millions of people in one place for this purpose, living examples have been restricted to fairly small local communities, such as the ancient Greek city-states, the New England town meetings and several Swiss cantons.

Large nation-states have been forced to abandon what many would consider the ideal of direct democracy, placing legislative authority in the hands of representatives chosen by the voters in regular, periodic elections. Yet some representative political systems have incorporated elements of direct democracy, such as the referendum, in which citizens are given the opportunity to vote on issues placed immediately before them. The Reform Party of Canada is a strong proponent of the referendum.

More recently some have suggested instituting a "cyber-democracy," bringing citizens together in a kind of "virtual assembly" based on a shared connection to a nationwide electronic infrastructure. In the United States, Ross Perot and others have proposed the establishment of an "electronic town hall," in which citizens, from the comfort of their own homes, could vote electronically on issues posed to them from their television sets or computer screens. For the first time in human history, it is theoretically possible to poll large populations in fairly short order. Direct democracy seems finally to be within reach.

Massive politicization

Yet there are two obvious difficulties with cyber-democracy that might cause us to doubt its supposed benefits. In the first place, merely allowing every individual citizen to cast a vote on a particular issue does not permit the sort of deliberation characteristic of a face-to-face assembly. Cyber-democracy would atomize citizens, keeping them from interacting with each other and tying them instead to whoever was providing the information concerning the issue being decided.

In the second place, and more significantly, convening a continuously sitting electronic assembly of the whole citizenry would lead to a massive politicization of life in which both politics and other pursuits would inevitably suffer. We human beings are finite creatures. We cannot devote ourselves to every possible endeavor. Life in community, particularly a large community, calls for a division of labor of some sort.

Even if cyber-democracy is technically feasible, in the larger human sense it would not be possible to have a society in which, day after day, everyone sits in front of a screen and pushes buttons. Bread would not get baked. Houses would not be built. Cars would not be manufactured. Physicians would not get trained. Children would suffer from neglect. The whole array of human life in all its diversity and complexity would atrophy, leaving a stunted and (in several respects) impoverished society in its wake.

It seems then that we are stuck with a form of aristocracy in our political life, and perhaps this is how it should be if we expect people to fulfil their own diverse callings in accordance with their God-given gifts. This is where representation enters the picture once again. Given the shortcomings of direct democracy, it would seem preferable to institute an arrangement whereby the advantages of aristocracy can be combined with those of democracy. In other words, a better form of government would capitalize on the specialized skills of the few while ensuring that they remain accountable to the general public.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

AMSTERDAM 1999

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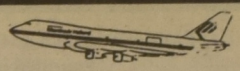

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Editorial

Storing up for the year 2000? You must be crazy!

There is a lot of talk and writing going on about the turn of the century. Much of it is hype. Some look upon the Y2K bug as the secular version of Judgment Day. Others are seeking religious significance in the event as, for example, the Denver-based cult named Concerned Christians, members of which were arrested in Jerusalem for planning either suicides or other forms of bloodshed at holy sites. They were hoping that their acts would trigger the second coming of Christ. It may be that other groups will follow to act out their apocalyptic fantasies, say Israeli authorities.

Psalm 99 wisdom

My pastor, Peter Slofstra, preached a very good sermon on the first Sunday of the year concerning this apocalyptic angst. Basing his sermon on Psalm 99, he worked with the idea of a seven-candle candelabra. The three ascending candles on one side point out that God rules, that he answers and that he forgives. All these points you can find in Psalm 99. The three ascending candles on the other side correspond with the first three and urge us to keep his commands, pray to him and live life boldly (don't be afraid to make mistakes). At the top of the candelabra is the candle that says, "Exalt the Lord our God," a phrase which is more or less the pivotal point of Psalm 99.

Bert Hielema told us in his December 18 column that Jerry Falwell is storing up food and ammunition — food to keep him going in the event of a catastrophe, and ammunition to beat off those who might want to rob him of that food. Pastor Peter warned against that kind of hysteria. Besides, he said, the date January 1, 2000, is an arbitrary date that has nothing to do with reality. It no more summons the return of Christ than did the year 1996, which was actually closer to being 2000 years after Christ. I would add that according to our calendar, the year 2001 is in reality the first year of the 21st century.

I heard a lot of good comments on Peter's sermon. You could tell that the congregation's resentment of hype was affirmed and they were reassured by the comforting notion that God reigns, and that the best thing we can do in 1999 right through into the year 2000 is exalt him. Thanks, Peter, for that sermon.

Genesis 6 parallel?

But I want to complement the sermon with some of my own thoughts. There is nothing arbitrary about the computer glitz that may well wreak havoc with a society that has made itself so vulnerable by basing its whole economy and social infrastructure on computers. The best computer experts in the world realize that it is not possible to change all computers and programs that are linked up with each other and make them Y2K compatible. There has to be only one weak link in the system and the whole system may crash, say some of these experts.

And who knows what panic will set in throughout the general population? It's not for nothing that the army and the police have cancelled all leaves of absence for the end of the year. And just look at how some passengers at Toronto's Pearson Airport became frustrated and angry when the delays due to a snowstorm grounded their flights for several days.

As far as I am concerned, being forewarned is being forearmed.

No, I am not thinking of storing up ammunition, but I am thinking of storing up a month's supply of food and water, and I want to do it in the next few months before panic buying sets in later. As well, I hope to do some conserving of fruit and vegetables this summer, the old-fashioned way, not relying on our freezer. And I want to ask myself how we can heat parts of our house without the benefit of electrical power.

I imagine myself to be a little Noah who was told to "take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and [your family]." Forty days and forty nights sounds about right.

Proverbs 6 advice

Am I being paranoid?

I don't think so. If someone had predicted the ice storm of 1998, wouldn't people in Eastern Ontario, Quebec and Eastern U.S. have been wise to store up food and water and provide for themselves alternate sources of energy? We don't know what will happen at the turn of the century. Maybe it will all slide by without much hardship. I hope so. But a month's supply of food is not wasted, even then.

I want to remind myself of Peter's sermon. God is in control. We need not fear. But we need not be careless, either. I offer this personal opinion as a simple believer to all my fellow believers. Don't worry. God will provide. But don't think that this means you don't have to have forethought and plans for the future. Proverbs 6:8 tells us to take our example from the ant. "Although it has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard?"

And by the way: do take some money out of your bank account and put it in a sock, because you don't know whether the bank machines will work on January 1, 2000.

Psalm 2 humor

Personally, I think the whole thing is a wonderful joke on our civilization. It has the ring of Psalm 2 in it. Don't you think that our society's trust in technology rather than in God resembles the stand taken by Old Testament era kings and rulers who rejected God and his Anointed One? If so, the following verse applies as well: "The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, 'I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.'"

So if you want my best advice for 1999, I would say: store up for yourself treasures in a place where moths and rust have no influence. You do that by exalting the Lord and his Anointed One.

BW

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Letters

Don't let government off the hook

Harry der Nederlanden's question: "Why absolve the government?" in CC of Dec. 18, 1998, deserves some comment.

A taxable benefit arises when your employer or company pays for an item that is of benefit to the employee or shareholder: a car, a house or a vacation to some place warm. Neither public nor Christian education would be a taxable benefit unless your employer or company paid for it.

It would be helpful to distinguish which government must be blamed or absolved: the writer blames the federal government for being inconsistent, prejudicial and arbitrary to name only a few of the traits for which the government should not be absolved. The whole thrust of Mr. der Nederlanden's argument is based on the failure to take the difference between "funding of education" and "taxes on income" into account.

Taxing everyone, but not funding "minority" education in Ontario — of that the Ontario government should not be absolved. It seems to me that the Christian community as a whole does not accept the responsibility for educating the young members of that community in spite of impressive baptismal vows to the contrary. A house divided against itself falls; without a united front the Ontario government will continue to discriminate and ignore us.

Let us raise the huge outcry this deserves!

Eugene Kruysse
Mississauga, Ont.

About Leviticus and flowerbeds

Thank you for the news article on the Campolos and your related editorial on homosexuality. Both were very fair and a refreshing change from the unthinking condemnation usually heard in evangelical circles. I'm happy that you are continuing your education on this subject, which is difficult for most people.

Those of us who are gay have not had a choice — we've been forced to think about homosexuality and have had come to terms with ourselves as we are, but straight people have the option to ignore it. You have courageously chosen not to. I was pleased that you recognize there is such a thing as homophobia. Christians and the church have a lot to answer for in terms of their neglect and outright hatred of homosexuals, and realizing that homophobia plays a role in this is a big step toward righting that wrong.

As for Leviticus 18, up to verse 18 the laws largely define and restrict incest, a biological necessity which applies today and is clearly not just part of the purity laws. However, a new series begins at verse 19, with laws condemning sex during menstruation and restricting intercourse with foreigners, which we view as part of the purity laws and don't enforce after Christ. These laws are followed by verse 22 with the famous "lying with a man..." sentence, and it would be natural to assume that this was also a purity law. In any case, the verse appears to say nothing about lesbianism.

'Urge' versus 'nature'

Let me address your concern about the bisexual person a moment. It may be in my nature to be attracted to more than one man, just as it presumably is in your nature as a straight man to be attracted to more than one woman. Paul does not mean, though, in Romans 1 to tell us that we should act on our natural urges by having sex with all the people we're attracted to. You should be faithful to your wife and I to my partner, if I had one (which, alas, I don't). What Paul means is that we should not act contrary to our nature — in your case, by having sex with a man, and, I believe, in my case, by having sex with a woman.

Bisexual people (of which there are proportionately rather few, incidentally), would appear to be in less danger of violating Paul's mandate in Romans 1, but that does not release them from the responsibility to be faithful to their partner. They must pick only one flower, just as you or I must. They just get to choose from more than one flowerbed.

You have made some good first steps. I'm looking forward to your February issue on homosexuality.

While I'm entirely comfortable and out, also to my family, some members of my family would be embarrassed if it became public knowledge that their son or brother was gay. Therefore, if you choose to print part of this letter, I must regretfully ask that you not publish my name.

Name Withheld

Correction:

In our Dec. 25 article entitled "CPJ wants Canada to invest in its children" we referred to Bruce Voogd as "CPJ's recently appointed public affairs director." This is not correct. The public affairs director position was Gerald Vandezande's and at this point CPJ is not replacing him. Bruce Voogd's position for the past two years and for the foreseeable future is financial development/membership recruitment co-ordinator.

Editor

Does not want to be sideswiped

I don't think the Christian church is the place to speak up for homosexuals when the Bible tells us it is wrong. I remember many years ago writing a letter about this subject to CC, saying that we should hate the sin but love the sinner. The truth doesn't change.

Over the course of my 43 years I have faced trauma, hope, joy, fear, and more trauma. My faith in the Christ who died for me waivers; and, like Peter, the Rock on whom the church is built, I doubt and doubt. But truth never changes.

If you want to follow all the other media go ahead, but don't include me in your readership. I went to Toronto District Christian High School in the very early '70s because my parents wanted me to learn the Christian truths. I don't want myself or my kids to be sideswiped by the disgusting theories held today.

The minister in my Presbyterian church fights battles against gambling, which is also declared as a sin in the Bible, but in this day and age we could go along with society on these issues or we could stick to the truth. The truth never changes.

As for me and my house... We ask the question: What would Jesus do?

I am not interested in wishy-washy Christianity.

Jantina Rossiter (Westendorp)
Utterson, Ont.

Paul did not lie to Felix

Bert, you said Gerald Vandezande "would always approach each politician as if he or she had never made a mistake in his or her life." You suggested that perhaps Gerald took his cue from the Apostle Paul who spoke to the corrupt governor Felix as "most excellent Felix" under whom "we have enjoyed a long period of peace ... and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation" (Dec. 25, CC).

I hope Gerald would not take his cue from this statement, since the words are not from Paul but from Paul's prosecutor, the flattering lawyer Tertullus (Acts 24:2-3).

Paul's opening words to Felix were, "I know that for a number of years you have been judge over this nation" (24:10). He simply stated a fact, without criticism but also without compliment. It's worth noting that Paul later spoke so forcefully to Felix of righteousness and the coming judgment that the rotten ruler was too shaken to continue the conversation (24:25).

There is a time to mention someone's faults and a time not to mention them; there is never a time to lie.

David Feddes
Palos Heights, Il.

Response: You are right. Thank you. I quoted the wrong text. I should have referred to Acts 24:10, where Paul expresses pleasure over being able to address Felix because he is a man who has years of experience as a judge, and to Acts 25: 25, where Paul indeed addresses Felix as "most excellent Felix." My point remains the same: Gerald treated "each politician ... with respect and gave them the benefit of a sometimes very large doubt." **Editor**

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Movie about Christ is covering the earth

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif. (religiontoday.com) — Distributors of the Jesus film want to show the evangelistic feature-length movie about the life of Christ to everyone in the world by the end of 2000. They know it will take a miracle.

"That's a big goal, but we believe that because the Lord has brought more than 800 organizations into partnership with us that it is still achievable," said Paul Eshleman, director of the Jesus Film Project, based in San Clemente, Calif.

"We're about halfway there at this point. It will take a miracle of God to go the rest of the way, but we keep on believing that the Lord will work that miracle if we're faithful."

An estimated 1.6 billion people have watched the film since it was released in theatres in the United States in 1979. More than 400 million watched it in 1998. The film, based on the Gospel of Luke, is a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ International.

It has been shown in 223 nations and territories, including some of the world's most remote areas as well as big cities. Television broadcasts and cinema showings contribute to that total, as do the efforts of 2,240 national film teams sponsored through Campus Crusade in 107 countries. A total of 815 denominations and mission agencies have used the film. More than 86,000 videos were distributed in France last summer in connection with the World Cup soccer matches.

The film has been translated into 470 languages, including several sign-language versions. A new translation is completed every 10 days.

A newly developed audio version can be heard in 14 languages, and is used in places where radio is the only available medium. In places such as Afghanistan, "listening to short-wave radios or international broadcasts may be the only way they can encounter the truth about Jesus," Eshleman said. "In the next two years, we hope to prepare at least 100 languages in a dramatic audio/radio format."

"In most parts of the world, radio drama is still very intriguing," Eshleman said. "Stations looking for this kind of programming would gladly put it on if it were available to them.

In difficult places, an audio-cassette is much easier to pass along than a video. We would like people to both see and hear the film. Where that's impossible, we'll supplement by using radio and audio."

'In their own language'

The film also is being prepared on digital versatile disk so it can be shown on computer screens in eight languages. It is available on the Internet in 15 languages.

"We've always believed that no one should have to learn another language in order to understand God's love and forgiveness for him or her, so we will continue over the next three to six years to prepare various translations of the Jesus film," Eshleman said. "We'd like for every language group of more than 100,000 to be able to hear the film in their own language."

It is a challenge to keep up with the demand for the film, Eshleman said. "We seem to be in kind of a window of relative freedom and openness in the world. Despite some very tough places, overall we now have more openings than we can take advantage of."

Workers who show the film are heroes, said Bob Bradberry, director of distribution for the Jesus Film Project. "In some nations such as India, film teams do this at considerable risk to themselves and their equipment. Their commitment, however, is such that they are willing to face verbal and physical abuse in order to tell their nation about the Lord Jesus Christ."

Christians in some nations are persecuted for showing the film. A number of Christians were arrested in one country for distributing the film last year, Eshleman said. "Some were systematically tortured until they revealed the names of others distributing videos in that nation." Some Jesus film team members have been beaten or persecuted for showing the video in their homes, he said.

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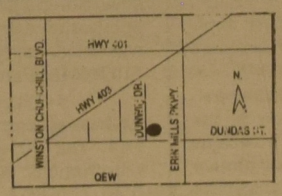

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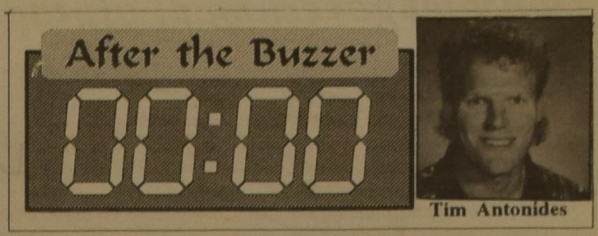


Superparent fatigue

Tim Antonides

On a typical Wednesday, Johnny wakes up at 5 a.m. and wolfs down a pop tart on his way out the door to hockey practice. After practice, his mom drives him straight to school and sends him off with a quick kiss. She will return at 3 o'clock to take him to his karate class. After supper, Dad and Johnny will hop in the car and go to the pool for his diving lessons. On the way, they'll stop to get Johnny's skates sharpened for the game on Friday.

If you have kids, does any part of your week sound a bit similar to this? As a teacher I've been witness to a good number of "superparents" who spend countless hours co-ordinating and facilitating recreational opportunities for their kids. There are also the piano, ballet, violin and dance lessons to contend with. I admire parents (and kids) who can handle such busy schedules. I also wonder if it's all worth it. From what I've seen, parents such as these fit roughly into one of three categories.

The first and largest group of superparents is those who simply want the best for their kids and want to expose them to as many different experiences as possible. They see the tremendous value in having their son or daughter involved in athletics (as well as in artistic and other experiences).

They want their children to learn to be responsible, diligent and physically fit. They also want them to gain some social and teamwork skills so that they can function in a world in which such skills are important. These parents are willing to get up for a 5:30 a.m. hockey practice because their child will benefit from playing hockey. They've been up for a couple of hours by the time I've even hit the snooze button. For that alone, I applaud them. And I'm a morning person.

Nothing is too much

The second category of superparents, as I see it, are the "Parents of the Year" contenders. These ladies and gentlemen are true parents of the '90s. They want to do it all — hold two successful careers, put their kids in as many different activities as the clock will allow, and still have plenty of time for nurturing of their family and each other. They sit down as a couple at the table with a calendar and figure out how to make it all work each month.

The third group lives in the vicarious experience dimension. Their kids are a reflection of themselves, and it is necessary for the kids to live out all the dreams of their parents. The kids are either responsible for fulfilling everything Mommy and Daddy were not able to do when they were younger, or they are supposed to compensate for their parents' lack of success in athletics or music. When the kids fail, Mom and Dad have failed. Don't feel any pressure, though, Johnny or Mary. Just do your best to win.

Our children are not going to be able to excel at everything. Instead of killing ourselves and our family life with relentless busyness, we might help kids focus on a smaller number of things which they really enjoy and show potential in. It seems to me that doing a select number of things extremely well is better than trying to juggle an endless number of commitments.

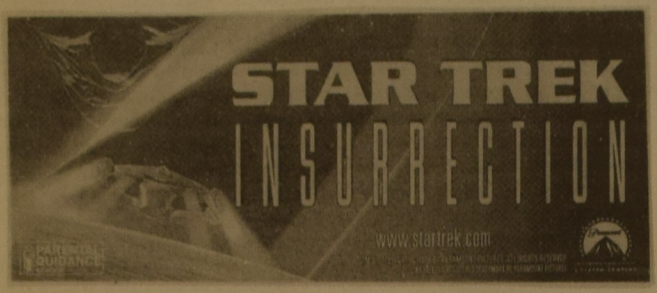
Maybe then peace can enter our homes and we can spare some time to allow Christ in. When Christ returns he will be more interested in how we used our time to prepare for his coming than in how many sports or artistic activities our kids could cram in.

Tim Antonides teaches and coaches Grade 5 at Surrey Christian School, Surrey, B.C.

Film Review

A muted insurrection

Marian Van Til



Rated PG. Stars Patrick Stewart, Jonathan Frakes, Brent Spiner, Gates McFaddon, Levar Burton, Michael Dorn, F. Murray Abraham, Anthony Zerbe. Directed by Jonathan Frakes.

This movie brings together for a second time on the big screen the *Enterprise* crew from "Star Trek: The Next Generation," whom fans got to know, if not love, via the television series of that name. That series was the first of three spin-offs from Gene Roddenberry's original late '60s *Star Trek* series.

All *Next Generation* regular characters are here: Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Stewart), Commander Will Ryker (Frakes), Dr. Beverly Crusher (McFaddon), Data the android (Spiner), engineer Geordi LeForge (Burton), and Worf (Dorn), the Klingon who returns from space station Deep Space Nine to join his old crew members.

On the whole, the *Star Trek* movies (there were six set in the time and using the crew of the original series) have tended to come off as feature-length, glorified television shows. This one has that feel as well.

Except for the visual excitement of seeing "space," the *Enterprise*, and various nifty manoeuvres on the big screen, one might well be watching a made-for-television film, sans commercials. Unfortunately, this film does not "boldly go where no one has gone before" in terms of character development.

On television, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* did an admirable job (as TV series go) of allowing its characters to grow, of presenting them with dilemmas, including moral ones, which stretched them as people.

Because the *Star Trek* films are by implication made for an audience which knows the characters via the TV series, one might expect, at least, that a film featuring these characters would make the best of the opportunities that cinema allows for going beyond television — in character development as well as special effects. But by and large, *Star Trek: Insurrection* misses that chance.

Corny humor and a moral

The plot does, at least, go off in a slightly new direction: Picard and company are pitted against, not new aliens or old enemies, but colleagues in the Federation itself. That premise has great possibilities for various moral quandaries and crises, but again, they are mostly missed.

Yet that doesn't mean that — assuming you were (are) a *Next Generation* fan — you should necessarily pass this one by. There's still the excitement of seeing old friends, as it were; there are relatively suspenseful moments; intermittent visual delights; periodic flashes of corny humor — a *Star Trek* trademark; and a "moral" to the story, another *Star Trek* trademark.

The moral this time around concerns a warning about the negative consequences of the big and the powerful, gaining even more advantage by usurping the rights of the small and the weak.

That's not a bad lesson. And Roddenberry's strangely optimistic — and, to me, annoying and unaccountable — view of the perfectability of humankind is now little in evidence.

Do you need to have watched TV's *The Next Generation* in order to enjoy this film? Probably not, though you'll certainly derive greater enjoyment and perhaps somewhat greater understanding of it if you already know the characters. In either case, this is a film to which one need not be afraid to take children of any age.

In a minimalist age, Newsboys are still 'fully wired'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) — The Christian rock band from Australia the Newsboys are known for pulling out all the stops in their live performances. Huge props, a massive light show, giant video screens and even "the evil drum riser," which shoots up nearly 20 feet and turns the drum set upside down, are parts of an evening with this band from Down Under. In this day of "unplugged" concerts and minimalist sets, these boys are still "over-the-top."

"It's not getting any smaller," laughs Newsboys bass player Phil Joel. "We really feel that if people are going to pay their hard-earned dollars to come see us, we want to be sure to give them four times their money's worth...."

Having to dig

That means putting on a concert that's on par with the best the world of mainstream rock has to offer, and not screeching to a halt between each song for a sermon. "Kids don't want to be preached at today," explains Joel. "...They don't want it on a plate — they want to work it out for themselves. If you have to dig for something a bit, it's worth more."

That doesn't mean there's no spiritual content in the show. In fact, a major emphasis this year is getting kids to take short-term missions trips. "It's working really well, and the interest from the kids is really blowing everyone away," says Joel. "Short-term missions had an effect on us growing up, and we really feel that kids — especially American kids — would really benefit by moving out of this culture for a few weeks and getting out to preach the gospel in a different culture. They'll come back really changed."

Lead singer Peter Furler observes that "most commitments to the Lord happen before we're 20 years old. After that we get a bit set in our ways. Unless we get set in the ways God wants us to, it can be trouble when we get older."

'Great tune, debauched show'

Today's Newsboys aren't the same as yesterday's. Former lead singer John James left the group to pursue other interests, and drummer Peter Furler has taken on lead singer duties. Steve Taylor didn't produce the latest effort, although he's thanked in the credits. And the band is now getting mainstream distribution through Virgin Records.

The Virgin Records connection helped get the band's song "Woo Hoo" placed on the controversial but very popular WB series "Dawson's Creek."

Joel explains, "It's a great tune on a debauched show.... It's funny to have 'Woo Hoo' on 'Dawson's Creek' because the show has to do with what the song is about — how the way the world looks at us and the way we see the world is the opposite. The way we are — to be alive in Christ and dead to ourselves — is kind of back-to-front. And here's Virgin Records taking 'Woo Hoo' and putting it on the radio and on 'Dawson's Creek.' It amuses me."

Printing press inventor most important person of the millenium: journalists

(religiontoday.com) — Johan Gutenberg, inventor of the printing press, is the most important person of the millennium, a new book says. A pair of New Jersey journalist couples spent years researching, arguing and consulting scholars before publishing *1,000 Years, 1,000 People: Ranking the Men and Women Who Shaped the Millennium* (Kodansha America). The Bible was the first book that rolled off Gutenberg's press, which was invented in mid-15th century.

Among notable religious figures near the top of the list were Martin Luther (#3), the monk cum Reformer who challenged the power of the Pope; and Thomas Aquinas (#8), whose proofs of God's existence became a cornerstone of faith.

Rounding out the list's top 20 were Christopher Columbus (#2), Galileo Galilei (#4), William Shakespeare (#5), Isaac Newton (#6), Charles Darwin (#7), Leonardo da Vinci (#9), Ludwig van Beethoven (#10), John Locke (#11), Mohandas K. Gandhi (#12), Michelangelo (#13), Karl Marx (#14), Sigmund Freud (#15), Napoleon I (#16), Albert Einstein (#17), Nicholas Copernicus (#18), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (#19), and Adolph Hitler (#20), who was voted the villain of the millennium.

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Fifty-five years of helping people in crisis

A tribute to Remkes and Janette Kooistra

Adrian Peetoom

The 15th-floor living room of Dr. Remkes and Mrs. Janette Kooistra was full of flowers and cards. The day before, December 20, the Waterloo, Ontario, Christian Reformed Church had celebrated both the 55 years of Rem's ordination to the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church and the marriage of these two remarkable people. The Advent liturgy provided room for Dutch carols, for children's worship, for Communion, for a young cello player, and for a sermon by Rem (his last, so he says).

Using Isaiah 7:14, Rem stressed how his own professional life had been guided by the awareness of Immanuel, God with us. During the service, guests and members were given the opportunity to express their gratitude to God for the contributions to the church which the Kooistras had made for so many years.

Rem was lauded for his public and political witness, and for his work as an author and lecturer. The Kooistras were praised for their help in the personal lives of many individuals, and for their perpetual cheer and good humor.

COURTESY ADRIAN PEETOOM

Dr. Remkes and Mrs. Janette Kooistra (centre) and friends celebrate 55 years of marriage and ordination.

Diverse gifts

The next day when I visited them, we reflected. Both Rem and Janette were born in the Netherlands, and Rem's penchant for helping others is "a legacy from his dad," said Janette. Janette had been a nurse in the Dutch village of Veenhuizen, where there is a minimum security prison.

This legacy of service had led Rem to the gospel ministry, but also to resistance activities during World War II. His diverse gifts were recognized when, after the war, he was appointed temporary mayor of Opsterland, the rural municipality surrounding the church he then served, until elections could be held.

"We've always enjoyed life," Janette said, "our life together, and our work." They began to recall the six congregations they served, three in the "old country," three in Canada. Each congregation had been different: small farmers; factory workers; civil servants; post-war immigrants; university students at Waterloo and Guelph. Then there was life outside the congregation: speaking, writing, teaching, family, friends.

Rem was always "on the edge." In the early 1960s he was not afraid to sanction birth control when many of his colleagues didn't. And, unlike many immigrants, he reached out to Christians born in and long established in Canada. He advocated taking intellectual risks. He was not afraid to pastorally touch the lives of suffering homosexuals.

"How have you coped, over the years, with rejection and animosity within the church?" I asked.

"It has been tough at times; it still is," he said. "After the difficulties in Classis Huron [over his views on homosexuality, which differ from those of his denomination] I never received a preaching invitation, not even from churches I served regularly as a guest preacher." ("You're also getting older," Janette interjected gently.)

"But I was heartened by a card I received from a retired minister who said that I, like some, 'have been esteemed worthy to suffer for Christ.' I wouldn't have thought of that, but I'm glad he sent me that card."

I said: "Some would say that in the beginning of your career our tradition was 'triumphalist' — we've got the answers — and it isn't any longer."

Rem answered, "It think that's true; but I remember feeling uneasy about triumphalism when I was young. I never liked big rallies — I stayed on the edges. I'm glad we're becoming more modest. The world has changed so much. Theology is being shaken to its roots. In our multi-religious society we are forced to make room for people who have very different ideas about God."

Then I asked: "So how do you feel about the future of the church?"

"I'm not pessimistic," Kooistra answered. "God will always gather his church. I like what's been happening in Holland; believers [of different stripes] are not afraid to talk to each other. I hope we can do that more and more in [North America]. The important point is to see God, who is around each of us and leads our lives. That's very clear to me. But the 'how' [doesn't seem as] clear now as when I was younger."

Rem is still full of plans for writing. Janette would like him to be less busy, though she has not given up serving members of the congregation with her special touches of grace. But the many who know and love the Kooistras will be glad to say: "Whatever you still do, you've already left a legacy in the lives of others that will endure long after you've left this earthly life. For that we offer our profound thanks."

Adrian Peetoom is a retired educational book consultant. He writes a column for CC ("2 over 65") and lives in Waterloo, Ont.

Nigerian state stops Christian education

Borno State, Nigeria (Compass) — Muslim leaders in Nigeria's Borno State have pressured the state government to cancel Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK), which was introduced in public schools in November 1998.

The CRK cancellation is a setback in the struggle by Christians to have their children taught the basics of the Christian faith. Muslim children were already receiving Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK). The battle for CRK in public schools began in 1986 when the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) took the government to court for its failure to allow the teaching of CRK alongside IRK.

When CRK was finally implemented, Muslim leaders protested against the policy. The Borno government rescinded its decision to implement CRK, reportedly in fear of an outbreak of violent attacks on Christians.

"Borno State is predominantly an Islamic state and as such, the teaching of CRK in our primary schools is an affront on the norms and values of good people of the state," said a spokesperson for the Muslim Student's Society in Borno.

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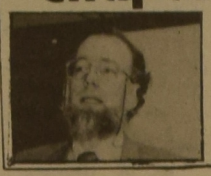
God as a wall of fire

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
● Al Wolters

" 'And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the Lord, 'and I will be its glory within'" (Zech. 2:5, NIV).

On Feb. 15, 1999, it will be exactly 2,517 years ago that the prophet Zechariah received the vision in which these words are heard. The vision in question is that of the man with the measuring line, the third of the eight visions found in the first six chapters of the book of Zechariah. These eight so-called "night visions" were received by the prophet "on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius" (1:7), which corresponds in our calendar to February 15, 519 B.C.

This date falls about 18 years after the first contingent of Jews had been allowed by Cyrus, the Persian king, to return from Babylonia to their ancestral homeland. They had returned to Jerusalem where the temple lay in ruins, and had initially begun to rebuild the temple. But various kinds of opposition had caused them to break off this work.

It had now been 16 years since that initial attempt had been abandoned, and the Lord sends two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to motivate the Jewish returnees to finish the job. The prophets were successful; the rebuilding of the temple was completed three years later — exactly 70 years after it had first been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

In the third vision, Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line, a man who is surveying the terrain of Jerusalem in order to determine where its outer walls should go. Then an angel is sent to this man with the message that Jerusalem will not need walls. God himself will be a protective wall of fire around her.

This encouraging news is followed by an exhortation to the Jews who still remain in Babylonia to return from exile: there will be lots of room in Jerusalem. In fact, there is so much room that even Gentiles will in the future be included in God's protective embrace.

Lessons from an image

The picture of God as a wall of fire reinforces a point that we often find in the Old Testament: don't trust in military defenses (in this case, thick walls of stone), but trust in the *Lord. He* is the one who can be relied upon to keep you safe. But the specific image of fire also suggests other points.

It is reminiscent of the practice of shepherds in ancient times. They would light fires in a circle around their flock in order to protect them against predators. In a similar way, God protects his flock from predators such as the devil, who is like a roaring lion.

Fire is not fixed and static like a wall of stone; it is living and dynamic. A ring of fire is *expandable* and can accommodate ever greater numbers. The biblical history of redemption and church history give dramatic evidence of this. That small band of Jewish returnees has now grown to millions of Christians worldwide.

Biblically speaking, there are two sides to the image of God as fire. He is comforting and warming to those within his embrace, but as the holy God he is also a consuming fire to those outside. In Jesus Christ we are guaranteed a place within, and we need not fear the judgment of God.

Finally, fire suggests the *glory* of God, as our text explicitly states. The fire around God's people will come to a focus within. The glory of the divine presence (what the Jewish rabbis called the *Shekinah*) will be manifested in the midst of God's people — first in the temple in Jerusalem, later in the person of Jesus Christ as he walked in the temple precincts, and after Pentecost in the new temple of the body of Christ.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He has been working for some years on a commentary on the book of Zechariah.

Catholics launch their own radio network

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (religiontoday.com) — A Catholic radio network, owned by Catholic laity in the U.S., began broadcasting Dec. 14, 1998. Catholic Family Radio features 24-hour all-talk programs focusing on faith and "family values." Plans call for the network to expand from its present seven cities to 50 of the top American markets, an official says.

"We're going to talk about solutions for life's problems," John Lynch, chief executive of the private, for-profit network, told the St. Paul-Minneapolis *Pioneer Planet*. "We are going to suggest that if you follow a Catholic style of life, you may have a happier family."

The lineup includes talk shows hosted by prominent Catholics from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays, commentaries, and hourly broadcasts of world news and Catholic news. A call-in show hosted on a rotating basis by cardinals from around the U.S., and local evening and weekend programs tailored to each market are planned. Christmas Masses from cathedrals around the world were another recent feature. Other fare could include University of Notre Dame football games and local Catholic high school sports.

Based in San Diego, the Catholic Radio Network owns stations in Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Milwaukee and Minneapolis. The network purchased stations in those cities from Minneapolis-based Children's Broadcasting Corp.

No Catholic voice

The Catholic Church has been nearly absent from the growing field of religious radio. The National Religious Broadcasters, a trade association based in Manassas, Va., says about 28 million people listen to religious radio in the United States each week, with some spill-over into Canada. Most religious radio stations are evangelical Protestant.

Of 1,223 full-time religious radio stations — a 30 per cent increase in 20 years — only about 15 are Catholic. The largest Catholic presence on radio is EWTN AM/FM, the radio portion of Mother Angelica's EWTN cable television network. There are about 70 million Catholics in the U.S. And Pope John Paul II urged the Catholic Church last year to use mass media to evangelize. "We had blown it with radio," Lynch said. "So a group of people got together and said, 'Here is an opportunity.'"

Founders and board members are conservative. They include William Clark, former national security adviser for former President Ronald Reagan; Frank Hager, managing director of investment banker Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co.; Joseph Fessio, a Jesuit priest who is editor of Ignatius Press in San Francisco; and Nicholas Healy, Jr., a vice president at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio.

Some progressive Catholic leaders are wary of the conservative orientation of the network, organizers said. A few progressive leaders, such as Milwaukee Bishop Rembert Weakland, have questioned the network's commitment to representing a broad scope of Catholic opinions. "They are not welcome," Weakland told the *Milwaukee Journal*, saying he feared divisive "bishop-bashing" on the talk shows.

In a separate effort, a group of 30 lay Roman Catholics bought WCAR-AM radio in Detroit this fall to make it part of what is planned as a Catholic broadcasting network in southern Michigan. John Brown, president of Detroit Catholic Radio, the group that operates the station, told Religion Today. The investors reportedly paid $2 million for the station and development of new religious programming, including interviews with prominent Catholics, and call-ins.

Charitable trust helps churches help the poor

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. (religiontoday.com) — The Pew Charitable Trusts has given $600,000 to ease the effects of welfare reform in the U.S. The grant is intended to develop classes to help church-based programs in poor neighborhoods, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* said. The 16-week classes include instruction in grant-writing, strategic planning, tax status and financial management.

Churches in low-income neighborhoods are expecting their nutrition, day-care, youth, job training, drug-rehabilitation and other social programs to be strained by an influx of people who lose their benefits. Some congregations reportedly are unsure about how much to extend their safety nets and whether to apply for government grants.

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Sabbath and Jubilee: A biblical basis

Sylvia C. Keesmaat

When an international coalition of Christians proclaims the audacious vision of "jubilee" for our world, it is proclaiming a vision of *sabbath* which stands in radical opposition to the central values and beliefs of our consumer culture. Sabbath is a challenge precisely to those societal forces which enslave us. I have, in good biblical tradition, seven points.

1. Sabbath is rooted in the "gift character" of creation, and as such nurtures an attitude of basic trust. Sabbath comes at the climax of the creation story as the crown

ICS

Sylvia Keesmaat

of creation. After the gift of a good creation, which humankind must nurture in a stewardly manner, there is the gift of rest, of settling back to enjoy the fruits of labor, of renewal after work.

The gift character of creation means that there is no need to keep frantically working to produce security in our lives — six days are enough for the whole of creation to fruitfully come into being and sustain us. What we have is not a result of unceasing striving but the result of a gift from God. God will provide.

Jesus' parables of the Kingdom focus on the gracious abundance of the Kingdom he is inaugurating. Repeatedly he describes that Kingdom in terms of a meal or a banquet, and he feeds those who follow him. The gift of abundance is this Kingdom's hallmark.

Sabbath also reveals the character of God. This is a God who does not need to frantically worry that this creation will fall apart if God rests. And knowing that engenders a "basic trust" in those of us who follow this God. If God is not anxious or worried, those of us who image God have no need for such anxiety either. We live in a culture of anxiety and of fear. But sabbath calls to move beyond the constant striving of anxiety to a fundamental orientation of trust.

2. Sabbath models a radical egalitarianism which is itself rooted in generous redemption. Throughout the biblical account, sabbath is rooted in both creation and redemption. While Exodus 20 roots sabbath in creation, Deuteronomy 5:12-15 states that the Israelites are to keep sabbath because they once were slaves and God has freed them.

That act of gracious freeing is to be embodied by Israel once a week. On the sabbath day all are equal: slave and free, animal and human; all are entitled to rest (Ex. 23:12). Every seventh year there is to be rest for the land as well (Ex. 23:10-12; Lev. 25:4). The land is to lie fallow in the seventh year in order that the poor and the wild animals may eat (Ex. 23:10-11).

Sabbath freeing calls not only for slaves to be released but for freed slaves to be given a fresh start by being provided with an abundance of animals, grain and wine (Deut. 15:13-14). In an ethos of creational gift, redemption, too, occurs as a lavish gift.

The fact that such egalitarianism is rooted in redemption is foundational to the critique which Jesus makes of first century sabbath practices (see Mark 2:27-28; 3:1-5). Where sabbath prevents redemption, it has lost its roots in the story, and its focus on salvation.

Moreover, Jesus not only describes the Kingdom as a generous banquet, but calls his followers to emulate such abundance: "When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, for they cannot repay you " (Luke 14:13-14).

Interestingly, such lavish generosity became a hallmark of the believers after Pentecost, who shared all in common and gave liberally to those in need (Acts 2:44-45). And although the early church had trouble maintaining the momentum of such a practice, it is clear from the Apostle Paul's writings that he considers such generosity central to the calling of Christians (see 1 Cor. 8 and 9).

All this is fundamentally counter to the fearful hoarding of our culture. The ethos of our time makes it a virtue to stash all one's money in saving plans for retirement. This is not seen as a manifestation of greed but rather as an exercise in prudence. The generosity of sabbath and jubilee judges such attitudes.

3. Jubilee and sabbath stand in judgment on idolatry and oppression. Both sabbath and jubilee are based on the premise that any economic system which is created and implemented by humanity will result in injustice precisely because we human beings are, in our disobedience, fundamentally inclined towards idolatry. Consequently, the release from slavery and the restoration brought about by sabbath and jubilee will be necessary again and again.

The need for sabbath and jubilee legislation is striking, given its context in the covenant between God and Israel. This covenant contains many provisions for looking after the poor. Hence, the intimate association of the practice of justice and the keeping of sabbath throughout the prophets. In Amos 8:4-6 sabbath observance functions as a protection for the poor, giving them respite from relentless exploitation.

This theme is, of course, carried forward in a number of ways in the New Testament. In Luke 12:13-21 we find a parable of judgment on the man who stores up treasures for himself (in bigger and bigger barns); his life is demanded of him. And in James 4:13-17 we find a similar judgment on those who in their arrogance assume that business and profit are everything without acknowledging that God is ultimately the giver of what they have.

The point is, of course, that sabbath models an alternative way of being in the world. This is something that we find very hard to hear in our culture, where our own self-sufficiency and striving are supposed to guarantee our success.

4. Sabbath enables us to image God. Rather than bearing the image our culture calls us to, that of good consumers and dependable cheap labor, sabbath and jubilee call us to the image of a God which is breathtakingly

CANADIAN ECUMENICAL JUBILEE INITIATIVE

"Sabbath freeing calls not only for slaves to be released but for freed slaves to be given a fresh start by being provided with an abundance of animals, grain and wine."

different. Texts such as Genesis 1 and 2, and Psalm 8 reveal that our calling is to image our God, to be stewards of the good creation in which we are placed.

But the God that we image is not only the creator God. This God is also one who hears the oppressed and frees them, who provides abundantly in the wilderness, who forgives idolatry and rebellion, who makes the desert places fertile. Throughout the story we are called to image this freeing, forgiving, fruit-bearing God.

If sabbath, then, is about becoming more godly, that means sabbath is intimately tied with becoming the kind of people who embody an alternative practice of righteousness, healing and compassion. And of course, such embodiment runs counter to the deadly practices demanded of us by the gods of profit and power which are dominant in our society.

5. Sabbath and jubilee are rooted in a covenant community. In radical contrast to our culture of individualism and competition, jubilee and sabbath demonstrate the way in which people are called to live in a covenant community with God and each other. One's economic status, whether that be of a wealthy person who has amassed capital in land or slaves or money, or of a debt-laden slave, is the business of the whole community. The entire covenant community together is called to right the situation.

In the New Testament, however, the jubilee theme is widened beyond the covenant community. You will recall that in the levitical legislation it was only Israelite slaves who were required to be released; foreign slaves could be kept (Lev. 25:44-47).

In Luke 4:18-19, however, there is an overturning of this ethnic, covenantal emphasis. Jesus quotes from the first verses of Isaiah 61 without announcing "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 61.2). Jesus not only omits this line of judgment against the gentiles, he goes on to compare his ministry to that of Elijah and Elisha. But the only two examples he uses are instances where Elijah and Elisha minister to gentiles.

Jesus uses the jubilee theme to overturn the inwardness and solely covenantal focus of the jubilee legislation itself! In the Kingdom he is inaugurating, jubilee is for all the peoples, those within and those without the covenant boundaries.

6. Sabbath and jubilee provide a vision which draws together in Jesus' life and which climaxes in the cross and resurrection. As we have seen above, Jesus' quotation of Isaiah 61 in Luke 4:18-19 is widely seen as a proclamation of jubilee. Others have pointed out that his concern for the poor and the oppressed picks up on sabbath and jubilee themes. This is undoubtedly true.

However, the whole of Jesus' ministry provides us an example of the enactment of sabbath and jubilee. The way in which Jesus provides food in the wilderness (like God's generosity in the wilderness in the Exodus), the way

Continued on page 11...

Jubilee 2000: where from and where to?

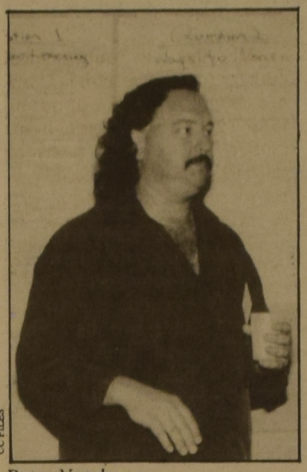
Peter Noteboom

The debt crisis has been on the agenda of development workers and economists since the 1980s when the first major fault in the global financial system occurred in Latin America. Mexico, for example, defaulted on its loans and the peso was devalued, Brazil and Argentina defaulted or threatened non-payment of loans and these countries were "bailed out" by Northern creditor governments and the international financial institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Quietly growing and accumulating

Since that time, in the poorer countries of the world where Northern investment and economic interests are not as strong, the debt load has continued to quietly grow and accumulate the way debt does when the borrower does not have the means to repay the principle of the loan. Despite various efforts to put the problem back on the international political agenda, progress was not made until the mid-90s when Pope John Paul II raised the issue in his Apostolic Letter on preparation for the jubilee of the year 2000. He wrote: "In the spirit of the Book of Leviticus, Christians will have to raise their voice on behalf of all the poor of the world proposing the Jubilee as an appropriate time to give thought, among other things, to reducing substantially, if not cancelling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations."

At the same time, the World Bank and the IMF, recognizing the seriousness of the issue and the need for debt reduction, came out with their own strategy for debt reduction called the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. This initiative requires governments to reform in ways that both encourage international investment and further impoverish the poor people in those countries through cuts in health and education services. In many cases, infant mortality rates and illiteracy rates are climbing again after years of slow improvement.



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Peter Noteboom

Then, Isabel Carter of TEAR Fund UK, the evangelical church's relief and development agency in the United Kingdom, during a flight over West Africa, received a vision for an international debt cancellation in the year 2000. She and other TEAR fund staff were influential in founding the first Jubilee 2000 campaign for the cancellation of the unpayable debt of the world's poorest countries under a fair and transparent process.

Led by Anne Pettifor, the Jubilee 2000 UK campaign has spurred on several other countries to organize their own campaigns, including Canada. Jubilee 2000's response to the World Bank HIPC initiative has been that it is too little, too late, too slow for too few countries at too high a price for the poor.

22 million signatures

In November last year I was privileged to attend the first international conference of 38 national Jubilee 2000 campaigns from around the world in Rome as a representative of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative and Citizens for Public Justice. There, for the first time, the campaign became truly global and the participants planned a global chain reaction of activities leading up to the G8 Summit meeting in Cologne, Germany, in June 1999.

At that meeting, 22 million petition signatures collected from around the world will be floated across the Rhine River in a barge from the Cologne cathedral to the G8 meeting hall across the river as a symbol of popular support for a new beginning for the poorest countries of the world.

Already, the terms of the international debate about debt have been changed: not whether or not debt should be cancelled, but when and how much. Canada's own Minister of International Co-operation, Diane Marleau, has spoken out publicly in favor of the Canadian Jubilee campaign. Finance Minister Paul Martin has publicly stated that the only way forward for African countries is to cancel their debt. Canada has the opportunity to play a leading role in bringing the debt issue to the board rooms of the World Bank and the IMF.

The more I study and learn about these issues, the more apparent it is that jubilee is a biblical concept that works like a crowbar: one leans on it and all the planks of one's convictions come loose. The international debt question, too, offers a window of insight into the North-South relationships of the financially richest and financially poorest countries of our world. Reflection and action on these important areas in the Christian community offers a hope for a new beginning, a chance to re-orient our lives and our world to God's Kingdom.

Peter Noteboom is Jubilee 2000 project co-ordinator for Citizens for Public Justice and is on the Jubilee 2000 steering committee for the Christian Reformed Church. He lives in Toronto, Ont.

Sabbath and Jubilee

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in which Jesus heals the sick, casts out demons, invites sinners and tax collectors to rejoice in the welcoming banquet of his Kingdom, the abundant graciousness and forgiveness he proclaims for sinners and demands that his followers proclaim as well — all of these demonstrate the restoration of right relation and the freeing of oppression at a societal level, which is central to jubilee.

However, the jubilee ministry of Jesus culminates in the most radical freeing of all: his crucifixion on the cross, in which he proclaims the forgiveness of all (even those who killed him); and the resurrection, which proclaims the renewal of all of creation once more. Jesus enacts, in his death and resurrection, the ultimate freeing from slavery and the ultimate restoration of the earth: the most radical jubilee one can imagine.

In attempting to shape our ethics, therefore, in a cruciform way, we too proclaim the message of release from slavery and the gift of restoration which Jesus embodied.

This is the message of jubilee for the Christian community — this is where all the themes we have so far discussed find their sure centre and empowering ethos.

7. Sabbath and jubilee are ultimately about entering into shalom. Sabbath and jubilee are all about rest. In the prophetic writings, rest is central to the promises of the new age when God will come and dwell among the people (Jer. 31; Ezek. 36). This rest is linked with a wider peace and shalom: rest means that threat is gone; that basic trust can be the way in which one views the world; that enemies (human, animal and climactic) are no longer enemies; that all is well.

In the end, therefore, sabbath and jubilee point towards the establishment of God's new age, God's Kingdom of righteousness and peace for God's people on the earth. The justice and righteousness which sabbath and jubilee attempt to restore to the land are not something that we can ever achieve ourselves. We attempt to live jubilee because that is our calling as image-bearers of our God and followers of Jesus.

Sylvia Keesmaat is senior member in biblical studies and hermeneutics at the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) in Toronto, Ont.

Disparities of wealth

In 1960, the wealthiest fifth of the world's population received 30 times more income than the poorest fifth. By 1993, the most affluent fifth had become 61 times wealthier than the poorest fifth. Looking at total assets, the world's 440 billionaires hold more wealth than the poorest half of the world's people. On average, each billionaire holds more wealth than six million of the world's poorest people. Globally, women are disproportionally represented within the poorest group, as are indigenous peoples, displaced persons, children and youth.

A variety of factors accounts for the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor in today's world. Poor distribution of wealth in today's world is still linked to debt. Whole countries, even relatively wealthy societies such as Canada, have adopted austerity and structural adjustment measures that give first priority to the payment of interest on debt at the expense of spending on health, education and social programs. At the same time, countries have been forced to reduce employment in the public sector.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative estimates that 70 per cent of all trade, most international financial transactions, and the majority of advanced technology is controlled by a mere 500 large corporations. Since these corporations are less and less accountable to governments and citizens, power is effectively concentrated in the hands of a relatively tiny minority of large investors and shareholders.

(Taken from "The Vision of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative")

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Uganda cries out for debt relief

PHOTOS COURTESY WORLD VISION CANADA

A child watering a garden with a woman weeding the plot is both real life and poignant symbolism.

To be a debt-ridden country is not unusual these days. Canada, one of the most prosperous countries in the world, owes $ 579 billion. But Canada's debt does not paralyze its social structure (though that debt has caused weaknesses), and it appears that the country can eventually get rid of its debt if it pursues wise fiscal policies and if, the Lord willing, its economy continues to flourish.

There are countries in the world whose total debt is much smaller than Canada's but who are unable to get out from beneath it. In fact, if things continue as they are, the debt will grow more crushing, and more and more children, for example, will be deprived of proper healthcare and education. One such country is Uganda, which has an external debt of $3.4 billion (US). What is it like for Uganda to be an impoverished country enslaved by debt?

Those who are working for World Vision Canada, an organization which is actively involved in improving circumstances in Uganda (among other places), help create a clearer picture of what's required.

Kathy Vandergrift of Ottawa is policy advisor to World Vision on international debt for Jubilee 2000, and Henriette Thompson of Georgetown, Ont., focuses specifically on Uganda's debt crisis. The following interview by World Vision representative Doug Blackburn on behalf of Henriette Thompson with Ugandan World Vision worker Moses Dombo tells volumes. **Editor**

Excerpts from a telephone conversation between Doug Blackburn and Moses Dombo of World Vision Canada

Doug: *What is the effect of the un-payable debt on Uganda, on Uganda's poor citizens?*

Moses: First of all, the government is having to cut down on the types of services that it can provide for its citizens, which implies that a lot of people who have in the past benefited from categorized social services like health and education are having to increasingly pay more to get these services on the public market. Uganda has privatized heavily; almost everything is privatized.

That means the poorest citizens are unable, many times, to pay for these services, many of the dispensaries and health units in the countryside are without drugs, without medicine. A lot of people have to resort to alternative forms of treatment.

In line with what I've just said, we have seen an increase in the number of traditional medicine practitioners. You may want to call them "witch doctors" or whatever you call them.

Doug: *Now, I take it from what you're saying, Moses, that this is not a positive trend. These people are turning to them in desperation and it's not so helpful. Or are you saying that these people ("witch doctors") are filling a need that the government can't fill?*

Moses: It is certainly not a positive trend. It means people who should have been looking for more scientifically proven forms of treatment are coming to other forms of treatment. If they have to pay for scientific medicine, it has to be in hard cash. When they go to these practitioners they can pay in alternative forms of payment, they can pay using their chickens, they can pay using a goat or something else.

Doug: *What other effects of the debt are there?*

Moses: The other effect that I could talk about is the impact on education.

Usually the government of Uganda spends only about three to five dollars per capita on education, and that would generally mean that a lot of what should have been going to support education goes into supporting those repayments. So many government - aided schools do not have sufficient facilities for the children to study in an environment conductive to learning. There are hundreds of schools, where children do not have furniture to sit on, where children do not have enough text books to read from. The number of teachers in the schools is small; we have until recently had a very high [pupil-teacher] ratio: one teacher to about 110 children in a primary classroom.

Doug: *Wow.*

Moses: Which would mean that the amount of time the teachers would spend with each child would be very limited. Now this is being revised currently as I speak. I think the parliament is debating whether this should not be lower provided that the government find more money.

Recently we were given a debt relief by the World Bank and IMF to the tune of approximately 400 million dollars.

We have been told by the government that this money is going to be invested in what is called the Social Sector Fund. This money will be supporting things like education, improvement in the socio-economic life of the citizens and many other things which are yet to be determined. I believe education and health will be two in this particular area, but the question remains to what extent will that amount of money change the trend of things.

Doug: *Is this $400 million of debt relief that you're talking about part of the HIPIC initiative?*

Moses: Yes.

Doug: *So with Uganda it has started. There has been some relief through HIPIC, you're saying, or is this something that is yet to come?*

Moses: It has been announced, and I think the technicalities and localities are now being worked out.

Doug: *How, would you say, does the jubilee campaign go beyond that? How does the jubilee campaign work with the HIPIC initiative? Is there a relationship?*

Moses: The jubilee campaign in Uganda is actually going beyond the HIPIC initiative.

We have a network of non-government organizations, academic and individuals which is called the Uganda Debt Network. They are the ones who are spearheading the jubilee campaign. World Vision is a member of the Uganda Debt Network and already we have launched, officially the Jubilee 2000 Uganda campaign on the 30th of October.

The wife of the president, Mrs. Jane Museveni, launched it officially and she was calling upon the countries to whom Uganda is indebted to be more considerate. That is irrespective of the almost $400 million under the HIPIC initiative.

But she also stated the challenge for Uganda and the people of Uganda — to ensure that they become accountable. There is no excuse for borrowing, misusing and turning back and saying: please forgive us for misusing the money you lent us. She was calling upon the nation to spend more responsibly and then be accountable for what we borrow.

Doug: *Are there some points that you would like [North Americans] to understand about the effect of debt or the Jubilee campaign?*

Moses: I could at this stage make one or two points.

The first one is, the fact that every Ugandan is so highly

Jubilee 2000: Uganda

Uganda Debt Network, a coalition of non-government organizations (NGOs), institutions and individuals, is participating in the Jubilee 2000 Global Campaign for cancellation of the unpayable backlog of external debt of the world's poor countries.

Jubilee 2000 was launched out of a strong concern that the World Bank/IMF Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) debt relief initiative was not comprehensive enough to address the external debt burden of poor countries.

Although Uganda has become eligible for debt relief under the World Bank and the HIPCs initiative, it still remains a "net borrower." It is also dependent on external loans and grants for almost 30 per cent of its budgetary resources.

Under the HIPCs initiative, Uganda is to receive $380 million US (Net Present Value terms) in debt relief. The debt relief provided under this initiative is only 20 per cent of total debt stock of $3.59 billion (US). The country will still be paying over $120 million (US) per annum in debt services. It is believed that much of Uganda's debt stock, is, however, not because of new lending but because of unpaid arrears and debt service.

indebted brings a feeling of inebriation; it's a feeling of being bound; it's like you're free but you're not free, you are already committed there. And the second thing is it makes the Ugandan society, the community feel like they are not in charge. Somebody else can dictate to them what should be done, and this is partly because we are indebted.

The creditor almost determines for you what we should be doing. Literally the people here believe that the World Bank and the IMF are responsible for our budgets, for our policies because it is believed that because we are indebted to them they dictate what we do.

We have seen an increase in the levels of corruption in different departments of government and other donor funded projects.

And so there is a concern that a lot of this money could be pouring in but probably not being put to the right use.

Doug: *Well that's an important point, because one of the obstacles we come up against is people saying: "OK, we will cancel or forgive this debt, but what's to stop this same situation from happening again?" How would you respond to that?*

[Some Canadians and Americans] resist signing the petition here, or ask questions about it saying: "But look at all the corruption overseas. If we cancel this debt then what will stop corruption from continuing or it may just happen again with new loans."

Moses: My thinking is corruption does not happen on the local scene alone. There are collaborators who facilitate that corruption.

And therefore the people who are responsible for pledging these funds or this money into the hands of the African leaders should be responsible enough to demand the good use of the money, demand transparency, demand accountability. Now the interesting thing is that civil society in Africa, in Uganda, for example, originally was not very well organized. Civil society was weak, civil society did not have a united voice. But today as I speak to you, civil society is getting better organized.

And in Uganda we have a Ugandan parliament that speaks and is able to challenge the Executive and take them to task over certain things.

Doug: *Good.*

Moses: And we have an active press, the media: television, the print media and other forms of fora; people are actively speaking about their future. Issues are being debated now which in the past were not talked about. It was unheard of for anybody to rise up and challenge Idi Amin about how he was using money. Today people will put the government to task and say, "Where are you taking our money; how are you using the money?"

Doug: *Good. What is the role of a non-governmental organization like World Vision in that furthering of civil society's effectiveness.*

Moses: Well, a number of things. One of the things we have done at World Vision is the empowerment of the people by providing information to them. In the communities where we are working, we trained local leadership so the leadership is able to challenge those that are responsible for making the policies that affect them. The other thing is working with other organizations to build networks, alliances with which our voice is then strengthened. World Vision is leading a process here in Uganda where we are forming what we call the Non Governmental Organizations' Forum — NGO Forum. And this is a forum that is supposed to bring together all non-governmental organizations so that we can speak with a united voice to government, to donor agencies and challenge some of the very policies they set as well as provide information to them.

Doug: *Why did World Vision Uganda decide to participate in the Jubilee 2000 campaign?*

Moses: We believe Africa has a right to step into the new millennium on a clean sheet, accorded an opportunity to begin differently. We also believe sufficient transformation has taken place — Uganda 10 years ago was a laughing stock; Uganda today is an example of what good leadership can do. There's good leadership — let the good leadership be rewarded, let it be recognized and let the leadership in Uganda be given an opportunity to plan for the country so that the country is taken beyond where we are. Right now we are talking of [more than] 60 per cent of our people living in poverty.

And this is morally unacceptable.

Doug: *Will you talk a bit, Moses, about your Christian view on this?*

Moses: Well, as a Christian, the Bible speaks of times for relief for people who are indebted. I believe strongly that we as Christians are instructed that at a certain time, if anybody is indebted and they are starved and they have tried to amend, time comes when they should be given an opportunity to begin anew.

I also believe as a Christian that it is fairly immoral for anybody to hold another so highly indebted for so long. It has an effect of demoralization on the nation. Because we are highly indebted we can hardly walk with our heads tall, we can hardly speak out when we should be speaking out.

It is like we are a bird that is free, but we can only fly within a cage.

Uganda Debt Network has designed an intercessory prayer.

It's a prayer asking God that our debts be forgiven. This is a prayer that has been distributed almost countrywide and people have been encouraged to pray this prayer to God like an intercession.

Education cuts are immense due to debt repayments by countries like Uganda, resulting in fewer children having the right to an education.

Uganda at a glance

Bert Witvoet

Uganda is a landlocked East African country a little less than half the size of Alberta. It includes Lake Victoria, the second-largest fresh-water lake in the world (Lake Superior being the largest). Its natural resources include, cobalt, copper and arable land. Its capital is Kampala.

Uganda is host to refugees from Zaire, Sudan and Rwanda. That is somewhat surprising for a country that under dictator Idi Amin expelled 60,000 non-citizen Asians in 1972 and killed more than 300,000 Ugandans by 1977. However, after various changes of government since 1979, when Tanzanian soldiers and Ugandan refugees drove out Idi Amin, the present government under Lt. Gen. Yoweri Museveni has made considerable progress in stabilizing the country and permitting the restoration of traditional kingships. A new constitution adopted in 1995 brought about elections that year, but a ban on political party activity will remain in force for another five years.

Of the country's 20 million people, one third are Roman Catholic, one third, Protestant, and the remaining third is divided almost equally between Muslim and Indigenous beliefs.

Coffee the major export

According to Internet information published by the Ugandan government, agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, employing over 80 per cent of the work force. Coffee is the major export crop and accounts for the bulk of export revenues.

Since 1986 the government — with the support of foreign countries and international agencies — has acted to rehabilitate and stabilize the economy by undertaking currency reform, raising producer prices on export crops, increasing prices of petroleum products and improving civil service wages. Policy changes have been especially aimed at dampening inflation and boosting production and export earnings.

Between 1990 and 1994 the economy performed solidly, based on continued investment in the rehabilitation of infrastructure, improved incentives for production and exports, and gradually improving domestic security. The economy again prospered in 1995 with rapid growth, low inflation, growing foreign investment, a trimmed bureaucracy, and the continued return of exiled Indian-Ugandan entrepreneurs.

Government budget figures established in 1995 indicated *revenues* of $766.5 million and *expenditures* of $894.3 million. Uganda's *exports* of gold, cotton, coffee, tea, corn, fish totaled $555 million that year. *Imports* of petroleum products, machinery, metals, transportation equipment, cotton piece-goods and food ~~totaled~~ totaled $1.18 billion. Uganda's *external debt* stood at $3.4 billion in 1995.

Jubilee on the rocks (the Luke 4 story)

George Vandervelde

Nazareth, prime location for a scintillating start of a new and grand jubilee, a jubilee to end all jubilees. Yet the whole thing shudders to a halt before it gets off the ground. Jesus sits there and does absolutely nothing. What gives?

To the town folk, the passages from Isaiah must have sounded like music to their eager ears. The long awaited Messiah, the Anointed One, has arrived? And he says he is anointed with the Spirit to cut loose the captives, to heal blind eyes, to set the oppressed free, and, most amazing of all, to announce the revolutionary innovation of Jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord?

It's even more than what they had hoped. It couldn't miss; he wouldn't do less on his old stomping ground than the fantastic things they had heard he had done in towns not so far away. Their hometown boy!

Let's go!

They were so sure that Jesus would come through in a big way that they had parked Rachel, born blind, who usually scuffled into a back bench, in the front row; they even had their fastest runner set to dash to a pre-arranged spot just outside the village, where Josh, the leper minus a hand, with oozing sores on his face, would wait for the signal to come in for the big moment. And talking of prisoners and captives, Abi and Nathan were languishing in a dank hole in a building guarded by a handful of Roman soldiers. Were they ready for Jesus!

And sure enough, Jesus gives the signal: Today these turn-around words are fulfilled in your hearing. Now! Not in stories of prophets long ago, not in some distant future. Now. Today. And not elsewhere, but here — in your hearing!

Spiritual rocks

But Jesus sits there. Where's the action. Marvellous words — but where's the follow-through? Great sermon — but where's the application, Jesus?

In Nazareth, it's jubilee on the rocks. The same rocks which strand all jubilee calls and programs that too quickly launch from the docks of Luke 4. To discover the biblical depth and scope of jubilee, one has to be prepared to ponder the jubilee snag in Nazareth.

The snag is so obvious that many orthodox commentators spiritualize the passage: the blind refers to those who are spiritually blind; the captives are those who are trapped in their own wiles; the good news is forgiveness of sins; that's the acceptable year of our gracious God. The Jewish people were simply wrong to expect a political messiah and a political kingdom.

These interpreters aren't

GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN

entirely wrong. Many biblical words and promises have layers of meaning. Yet, the reduction of this passage to a spiritual message is clearly wrong. Jesus may not have healed the blind in Nazareth, but he did almost everywhere else it seems. He did liberate people from physical oppression.

Tell John the Baptist what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk; the leper kisses his child again, the deaf hear; the dead do a jig; the poor have good news brought to them.

Looking for judgment

Those who describe the Nazareth event as a "Messianic Manifesto" are right. Luke purposely pulls this event up front in his telling of the Good News. He places this story in this strategic place in order to outline the basic features of the Jesus program. And that program is every bit as physical as it is spiritual. The Kingdom, after all, is a many splendored thing.

But then, what about that hitch? Why stall?

Some point to the fact that nothing happens in Nazareth because Jesus speaks only gracious words. Isaiah, after all, promises, not only a year of God's favor for his people, but speaks of "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61).

Can you blame the good citizens of Nazareth for expecting that the Year of Jubilee, the year of liberation of the oppressed, would be ushered in for Israel when God wreaked vengeance on their cruel oppressors, presently, the hated Romans? Judgment on the enemy is the flip-side of liberation. Liberation without judgment is utopia, a pie-in-the sky jubilee.

Who is this Jesus?

That's part of it. But the problem lies far deeper. The synagogue crowd doesn't take offence simply because Jesus is a bit one-sided. They take offence because in the gap between sermon and application, announcement and action, manifesto and mission, stands Jesus; sits Jesus.

When their ears hear fulfilment, all eyes fix on Jesus. For a time — too long a time — what they see is what they get. And all they see is an immobile Jesus. The people are forced to come to terms with the first part of Jubilee: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me: Messiah.* At issue here is the identity of Jesus.

At Jesus' baptism, a voice comes from heaven: "You are my Son." And right after that Luke forces the reader to ponder the strangeness of that word "son" when Luke traces Jesus' lineage back to the beginning, ending with "son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God."

Is that all it means? But immediately, the thread is picked up by the temptation story. Here, the arch-enemy knows better. Twice he introduces his gambit with "*Since* [not "*if*"] you are the Son of God...."

Jesus explicitly told his hometown crowd: "The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me." Fulfilled today! But it seems to be lost on them.

Good old Elijah?

Then the clincher. When they will not move from hearing to seeing, to recognition, Jesus does pick up the judgment side of Jubilee that he dropped from his sermon text. In effect, he starts a new sermon. Or is it an application on the fly?

The crowd's hearts must have revived when they heard Jesus latching on to the stories of Elijah and Elisha. At last, Jesus would come through. After all, these were Israel's prophets of old, in the good times, giant folk heroes, astounding miracle workers — and both of them had international fame. Elijah and Elisha — how could they miss? Jesus picked these stories as the belated prelude to the launching of his Jubilee mission in Nazareth.

But what is Jesus doing with these stories? Why make such a point of the fact that there were many lepers in Israel but that none of them were healed? And what is it with Naaman's home country? They know very well where he came from. Why does Jesus have to make Naaman"s name sound like a searing accusation? Naaman the *Syrian*. What's the point?

During that horrible famine so long ago there must have been many widows, sure; but why throw it in their faces in the way Jesus seems to be doing? Why emphasize that Elijah was sent to none of them? And again, why, on Jesus lips, does the name of the widow's country cut like a knife? Zarephath in *Sidon*. What is Jesus getting at?

Not heroic stories

Jesus is busy turning their stories upside down. These aren't stories of Israel's glory days. They tell the sad tale of Israel's spiritual-social destitution, their faithlessness.

In the days of Elijah and Elisha, Israel was carrying on with Baal. Sure, for one brief moment they were mesmerized by the razzle-dazzle fire from heaven on Mount Carmel. But how quickly the fire sputtered and died. Except for a small number, they cozied up to Baal once more. The famine itself was God's judgment on this people. No wonder the prophet was told to bypass Israel.

What Jesus does in the telling of these stories is to pick up what he dropped in the reading of Isaiah. The day of vengeance silently falls on Nazareth. The stories of Elijah and Elisha, too, are being fulfilled — in their seeing. Nazareth is about to be passed by.

So enraged are they by the right-side-up stories that they are set to lynch Jesus. Jubilee in person on Nazareth rocks. But suddenly their hands, so eager for jubilee action, fail them. And finally they catch a glimpse of who he is, but a glimpse now, not of his face, but of his back as it disappears from view.

In dramatic words that mark the high point, or low point, of this story: Luke drives home the flip-side of the acceptable year of the Lord: "But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way." The today of jubilee ends in a today of judgment.

Jesus on our terms?

In the Nazareth proclamation of Jubilee reverberates the warning against the ever-present temptation to separate the Messiah from the manifesto, the Mediator from the mission, the person from the program. We can't have one without the other. We can't sit and listen politely to the jubilee call for jubilee, and choose instead to cultivate a personal relation with Jesus.

Neither can we run with the program and run past the person of Jesus. When we want Jesus on our terms, the silence of Nazareth calls us, ever anew, to come to terms with him.

That call comes in the midst of all jubilee initiatives and jubilee campaigns. As artificial and arbitrary as the timing of the new millennium is, it may prove be a God-send, a moment in which the God, who so passionately loves and pursues justice, delights.

God's grief

After all, if it pains a painter to see her canvas destroyed, how much more must it grieve the Creator to see his handiwork maligned in India, mutilated in the Sudan, crushed in the Congo, trampled upon in the streets of Toronto.

So for God's sake, let the jubilee initiatives roll, let them flow like rivers. To have paused at Nazareth is to have heard a trumpet blast that penetrates to the depth and height of this suffering creation, that permeates the entire being of Christ's followers. To have fixed our eyes on the figure seated in the synagogue is to have witnessed in miniature the inauguration of jubilee-restoration that is as new, as surprising and as disturbing as is the person and (in)action of Jesus.

In the Nazareth drama, Luke tells in a nutshell the entire story of Jesus, as well as the sequel told in Acts. It is a story of a jubilee that, though contested all the way, cannot be stopped, for it is concentrated in the figure who is seated — and strangely active — still.

George Vandervelde is senior member in theology at the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) in Toronto, Ont.

Jubilee for children

Jeanette Romkema

Are children, as well as adults, being called to action to bring a new beginning? How can I talk to children about Jubilee? Where can I find books to read to my children about Jubilee? How can I link a book with a heavy topic like "Proclaiming Jubilee"?

These are provocative questions asked by many concerned adults wanting to respond to God's call for us to Jubilee. The books below offer a way to do this.

These books are meant as a stimulant for discussion and as an introduction into a particular way of thinking and being in God's world.

On Jubilee:

Old Turtle

By Douglas Wood and illustrated by Cheng-Khee Chee.

Michigan: Pfeifer-Hamilton Publishers, 1992. 55 pp. Fiction picture book for all ages. Cassette also available. ISBN 0-938586-48-3. Hardcover. $23.95 (Cdn); cassette, $16.95 (Cdn).

This award-winning book promotes a deep understanding of the earth and our relationship with all beings who inhabit it, as well as recognizing God as the divine creator. Both the visual and written messages of peace and reconciliation between peoples and all living things will move even the coldest heart to reflection. A *must* for every home and library, and one which beautifully introduces the idea of a time for change: for Jubilee.

Release from bondage:

Listen to Us: the World's Working Children

By Jane Springer.

Toronto: Groundwood Books, 1997. Non-fiction for all ages. ISBN 0-888992-91-21. Softcover, $16.95 (Cdn); hardcover, $24.95 (Cdn).

A unique book which offers accounts of different working children from around the world. Through actual photos and text readers receive an authentic look at this growing concern for citizens of the world today.

I Have a Dream

As spoken by Martin Luther King Jr.

New York: Scholastic Inc., 1997. 32 pp. Historical picture book for all ages. ISBN 0-590-20516-1. Hardcover, $21.99.

This book offers Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech delivered August 28, 1963, that moved and inspired America and continues to act as an inspiration today. Each page is illustrated by one of 15 Coretta Scott King Award and Honor book artists, and is a way our children can be challenged to think about what dreams we have for God's creation and people.

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES

Redistribution of Wealth:

One Day We Had to Run!

By Sybella Wilkes.

Evans Brothers Ltd., UNHCR, Save the Children, 1994. 61 pp. Non-fiction for Grade 3 and up. ISBN 237514-89-3. Hardcover. $12.95 (Cdn).

Since debt, economics, distribution of resources and the like are all things that can drive a country into war and crisis, this book about Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia is an excellent one for starting discussions about Jubilee. Complete with maps, narrative accounts from refugee children, historical notes and children's watercolor paintings depicting their experiences, readers get an authentic look at what the world's 20 million refugees face.

The Rainbow Fish

By Marcus Pfister and translated by J. Alison James.

New York: North-South Books, 1992. 28 pp. Fiction picture book for grades PK to 2. Available in book & video. ISBN 1-55858-009-3. Hardcover - $24.95 (Cdn). Boardbook. $12.95 (Cdn); video, $12.95 (Cdn).

This award-winning book is about a very beautiful fish which has been blessed with many shiny scales. Although he is the "wealthiest" fish in the water, he is not the happiest. It is not until he shares one scale with all those who have none that he finds the true meaning of happiness. The ocean is suddenly brought to life with everyone's glitter, and unity is found in the community of fish.

Renewing the earth:

The Lorax

By Dr. Seuss.

New York: Random House, 1971. 32 pp. Fiction picture book for all ages. Video also available. ISBN 0-394-82337-0. Hardcover. $18.00 (Cdn).

In typical Dr. Seuss style, readers will enjoy the imaginary creatures created for *The Lorax*, and be touched by their humor and ability to mirror our world today. The land created in this story is slowly destroyed by greed and carelessness, which leaves everyone wondering how to bring "renewal to the earth." Dr. Seuss speaks to all ages as few authors do.

Where the Forest Meets the Sea

By Jeannie Baker.

New York: Greenwillow Books, 1987. 32 pp. Realistic fiction picture book for grades 1 to 3. ISBN 0-688-06363-2. Hardcover. $24.95 (Cdn).

Using collage to illustrate, Jeannie Baker takes the reader through the past, present and possible future of a rain forest in Australia. Ending the book with the question: "But will the forest still be here when we come back?" the reader is asked to reflect on the world God created and the one we are re-creating. A good opportunity for discussions of renewal.

Comment

Is 'evil' worse than 'sin'?

Dear Adrian,

We recently had good and long-time friends spend a couple of days with us. Over beer with crackers and cheese one evening we got on the subject of what is "evil." Don't ask me how — I guess beer opens up some interesting avenues sometimes.

Anyway, I found myself looking back to the years when I was working with people who had encountered evil, like survivors of concentration camps. I did a good deal of reading and thinking about evil then, and as part of that study I made a visit to Dachau, which was a very profound experience.

I felt that our friend was looking at "evil" too individualistically and too much like something "out there" which might or might not affect us. As I understood him, he was saying that evil is basically anything that is not in our best interests.

The next night we went to see the movie "Pleasantville," supposedly showing the contrast between the 1950s and the 1990s. I thought it was disgustingly superficial despite its five-star rating, though I must admit I was a minority in that discussion. But the movie reawakened questions about good and evil.

As a working definition of evil, I don't think one can improve on Scott Peck's definition. He says in *People of the Lie* that evil is anything which is against life or anti-life. He means, of course, life in the broadest possible sense of the term.

Evil is the opposite of and opposed to anything creative or life-giving or spirit-enriching. Evil is willfully and consciously destructive, but people don't necessarily experience it that way.

My own sense of it is that whether or not we personify evil in Satan or demons, evil is a kind of infestation which enters people or groups subtly and often outside of their awareness, so that it can be judged only by its fruits.

I think of the excesses of Nazism or of capitalism or of racism or power-mongering of any kind which were (are) committed by many ordinary people for all kinds of "good" reasons: obeying the orders of superiors; protecting my family, "our" way of life; or even defending the Christian faith as we conceive it.

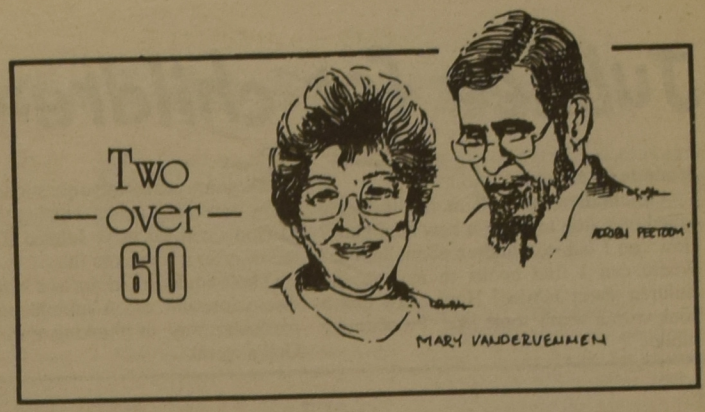
Which leads me to something I have often thought about: we sometimes need to make a distinction between "sin" and "evil." We emphasize right or wrong deeds. We talk about sins of omission and commission, and our judgments and confessions are usually about things that have been done or not done.

I think an example of this is our over-emphasis on sexual sins. The young couple planning marriage and consummating it before the wedding day may be sinning, but they probably are not motivated by an urge to destroy their love for each other. In that sense I wouldn't call it evil. Of course there are sexual acts which can only be called murderous to the human spirit, unquestionably evil. But some of those are committed by church-going, legally married people who are in abusive relationships.

I know that opens up many cans of worms. Am I really saying that "sin" isn't as bad as "evil"? Well, I guess I am, and yet I don't want to downplay the seriousness of sin. But was Jesus saying something like that when he railed at the Pharisees for tithing their herbs and ignoring the heart of the law?

Maybe you and I should have a beer with crackers and cheese!

Mary



Dear Mary,

This is the first time in our correspondence column that I felt no immediate connection with your opening letter. Of course that has nothing to do with you. The reason is simple: I have never really seriously and systematically thought about "evil" and "sin." Your letter is forcing me to do so. Thank you. Friends are not only for the familiar, they also point to the unexplored.

Of course I have had fleeting thoughts about sin and evil. How could I not have, seeing that I've been attending Christian worship services for over 60 years! I also remember that I wrote a CC column many years ago in which I recalled the various "sins" of my youth, actions now perfectly okay: biking on Sunday, playing cards, going to movies, investing via the stock market, etc. And you will recall that I'm less likely than you are to call pre-marital sex a sin.

Like you, I have wondered, off and on, whether sin is primarily an individual's "do's" or "don'ts," or whether we ought to be thinking more collectively and structurally. And I have felt, like you, the overwhelming presence of evil, perhaps made sensitive by Scott Peck, as well. Accounts of serial killers, of the Holocaust, seeing the contorted faces of fundamentalists of whatever stripe who will stop at nothing to get their way, TV images of African teenage boys with guns who no longer have any bridles stopping them from wanton and repeated killing,make me shiver in the presence of something that is so overwhelmingly distorted as to be beyond any control and repair.

I remember preachers going to town on "sin." Using as text Exodus 19, one thundered that to address God as "You" (instead of "Thou") was akin to the sin of encroaching on Moses' Mountain's "holy space"; grievous indeed. This preacher is in heaven now, and I hope he's enjoying a friendly beer (and cheese and crackers) with friend God while having a good laugh about his own earthly foolishness.

More lasting has been the message of another preacher, namely that sin (evil) is mystery, and that no explanations will ever cover its presence. And I lean towards the notion that the identification of sin and evil in one's own life is only possible through the eyes of others; and in memory.

What I'm saying is that sinning and doing evil doesn't often feel like sin and evil at the actual moments of their occurrence. The ultimate mystery of sin and evil is that the senselessness of both makes sense to the perpetrators at the moment of doing. Therefore, we need others to alert us to our own sin and evil: friends, enemies, prophets, children, family members.

The trick is to be sensitive to what we see about ourselves in the mirrors of what makes others react to us, positively and negatively. If we are sensitive, then we are able to confess, seek forgiveness, and be forgiven.

I can think of exceptions, of human beings who willingly and without conscience perpetrate evil (perhaps some of my earlier examples qualify), who are fully aware of what they are doing while doing it. Sinning against the Holy Spirit perhaps, for which there is no forgiveness.

Mary, you've made me dig deeper into this mystery, and I'm not altogether grateful. This kind of thinking is depressing. But let me end by saying this: without a profound awareness of the existence of sin and evil, one cannot have a profound sense of gratitude for forgiveness and restoration.

At least for the coming weeks I shall more vividly attend to the Confession/Assurance/Rules for Living portions of our worship services.

Love,
Adrian

Adrian Peetoom is a retired educational editor who lives in Waterloo, Ont. Mary Vander Vennen is a retired therapist who lives in Toronto.

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A grudging consensus on 'whole farm relief'

Elbert van Donkersgoed

WOODSTOCK, Ont. — On Thursday, January 7, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) organized a workshop for its pork-producing members. Fifty-five gathered in Woodstock, Ont., to discuss marketing, disaster relief and mutual self-help.

It was a meeting born of disastrous pork prices. This is not just a typical cyclical low in the pork sector. We've learned how to respond to those — just wait for better times to return.

This is about pouring feed in front of pigs and knowing that the price they will bring next week will be dramatically less than the cost of the feed they devoured. Borrowing — eroding equity — is necessary just to pay the feed bill.

There was much scepticism about the coming disaster relief program. The planned "Whole Farm Disaster Relief Program" is uncoupled from production. Uncoupled from production is my way of emphasizing that the financial help this new concept will provide is not directly linked to how many pigs anyone produces.

Because farms are so very different, support will be individualized to each farm. Two farms that are identical in every way, except for their choice of year-end for the purpose of calculating income taxes, will get very different levels of support.

We've learned that producers applying for assistance will need to do a modified accrual financial statement for 1998. If the methodology used in Alberta is adopted, inventory will be valued at the average value of the last month of the year — the lowest price month for pork during 1998. There will be no accounting for the dramatic slump in inventory value from the beginning to the end of the year. That's why it is being called a modified accrual statement.

Only if a farmer actually reduces inventory levels will the new program provide some relief linked to these much lower values. But in these circumstances the chances are good that the inventory was actually sold off at a price better than the year-end evaluations. Result, a producers eligibility for disaster relief will be reduced if he has cut back production.

There was a grudging consensus among CFFO members that the program, warts and all, needs to proceed on an interim basis, without delay. The need for immediate support arises from the looming forced restructuring on a number of farms to purchase inputs for spring planting.

We fully expect that the experience with the coming interim payment will cause us to ask for a number of significant changes before the full program is finalized.

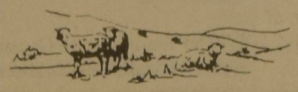
For that we want provincial and federal officials to take all the time they need to make this new approach to assistance work for Ontario farm circumstances.

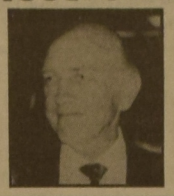
Elbert van Donkersgoed is executive director of CFFO and publisher of Earthkeeping Ontario. This opinion piece was originally prepared for CFCO Radio in Chatham, Ont.

Smaller and better in 1999

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE





Vern Gleddie

I hope that, like Canadian banks, big doesn't get bigger in 1999. For the sake of efficiency and humanity large companies could break down into smaller companies. Farms, on average, could be smaller and, thus, even more viable. We would be better off were city dwellers in more medium-sized cities rather than in a few huge ones. Houses could be reduced in size to accommodate the smaller families of today in a more stewardly way.

My wife and I learned a good deal in 1998 about building houses. We put up a second house on our farm so that we can have regular extra help. With that we learned enough so that in the unlikely event of ever building again, we could do the general contracting.

Those bureaucrats!

Something that I did not anticipate was the inefficiency of the large companies with which we had to deal. Generally, the small companies had a face: the people we dealt with were the ones doing the work. But the big operators, which were the utility companies, required considerable research, paper work and phoning to obtain information and action. Their workers, too, were far removed from the bureaucracy.

For example, on a Friday before we staked out the house location, I telephoned the power company with two questions regarding power entry and hook-up. I was referred to their engineering department, where I had the choice of talking to Doug S. or Tim. R.

Doug, who came to the phone, told me he didn't have the information at hand and would call me back. On Monday I called the power company again asking for Doug S. The person, at the other end of the line, who identified himself as Jose, said there was no one there by that name.

"Sure there is," I replied, "I talked to him on Friday."

"I will check again, but I know of no Doug S. here," said Jose.

"Then please try Tim R.," was my next request with at least a tinge of exasperation in my voice. So he checked and assured me there was no such person by that name either.

To the credit of Jose, he was as helpful as he could be. He asked where I lived so that he could get some regional help. I told him I lived near Gibbons (eight miles north of Edmonton). "Is that near Leduc?" he wondered (Leduc is 20 miles south of Edmonton).

Jose promised to look into the matter further and call me back. A few minutes later the phone rang. "Hello, is Doug S. there? We have a customer looking for him." It was Jose and I had to tell him that I was that customer. With a sheepish laugh, Jose finally admitted he was stumped.

I waited a few minutes and rang the power company again. This time a female voice answered. I asked for the engineering department, purposely avoiding asking for anyone by name. "Would you like Doug S. or Tim R.?" came the immediate reply at the other end.

This experience served only to add to my suspicion that mergers of companies into ever bigger ones is not for the sake of efficiency, but rather to achieve control of markets. And so wherever and whenever possible I hope to patronize and promote locally owned enterprise. Small is beautiful!

A post-Christmas P.S.

In my Dec. 11, 1998, column I wrote a fictional account which actually came true.

The wise men and women have all departed for the East and West, and yes, we all gathered in the barn on Christmas night. It took a long time to thaw a lock on a van from Saskatchewan, find extra clothes and dress everyone. The temperature was 25 degrees below zero, but everyone was game to make the Christmas pilgrimage.

Even great-grandma Greidanus, 89, walked through "Bethlehem" in borrowed ski pants and jacket.

Olivia, our determined two-year-old, latched on to the main torch for light in the stable, but we were able to see the cow and calf and the sheep by picking up Olivia and turning her in the direction we needed light.

We sang on the way and we sang in the stable. Mother Annette, seated on a bale of straw, rocked thickly swaddled Matthew. In good Greidanus tradition, cameras flashed. There was mention by our children of making memories and adding features next year. For Wilma and me it was a warm feeling on a cold night

Vern Gleddie is a sheep rancher near Edmonton, Alberta.

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Nose for News

Bert Hielema

I LOVE TO START OUT my column with some good news. Well, here it is: Men who eat candy may live longer. I am not a good typist and often when I try to hit the letter "i" on the keyboard, I hit its neighbor, the "o," which I just did, and also came out with a good line: Men who eat candy may love longer. Well, that last line is not yet proven by scientists, but the first one is contained in a study of the nibbling habits of 7,841 Harvard male graduates.

Here is what the Harvard study found. (Harvard, as you know, is one of the most elite U.S. universities): "Men who eat chocolate and candy — regardless of how voracious their appetite for goodies — live almost a year longer than those who abstain." The researchers from Harvard University's School of Public Health said they don't know why.

I HAVE AN OPINION on this. I have mentioned in an earlier column that eating chocolate makes people happy. Well, you and I know that happier people live longer: they have more *joie de vivre*, as the French say, a greater delight in being alive: they are more adventurous and celebrate God's goodness even though they may not be Christians. I think they don't have that Calvinist coolness which sometimes sees life as a dour duty. Actually, it is not just the eating of chocolate, it also is the way you eat it, cherishing its delicious taste, savoring it with closed eyes while letting the precious stuff slowly melt in your mouth. *Carpe diem*. Enjoy each moment the Lord gives us.

WHILE ON THE SUBJECT of chocolate: here is what I found in the (London, England) *Daily Telegraph*. A headline says: "Chocolate choice reveals all." The story is based on a book called *Chocolate Therapy: Dare to Discover Your Inner Centre*. Says the author, psychotherapist Murray Langham: "The type of chocolate you pick from the box, even what you do with the wrapper, reveals secrets about your own inner centre. People who prefer circular chocolates are social butterflies who love to party. Those who choose oval shapes are creative and socially adept. Squares indicate a dependable, balanced, honest and truthful character. People who take rectangles are a rock for others to lean on, have calm personalities, are good listeners who enjoy organizing others. Spirals are bursting with energy and are attracted to strange challenges.

As for types of chocolates, lovers of milk chocolate tend to be nostalgic and live in the past; those who go for dark chocolate are forward looking; while white chocolate eaters find it hard to make decisions. I like bitter chocolate a lot. Here is my picture: a connoisseur of the fine things in life. Fillings are important too: almond nut lovers have quickness of mind and are keen to help others; brazil nuts are diplomatic, cultured and stylish. What people do with the foil is also revealing. Those who roll it into balls may be bored with their sex lives and need excitement.

Well..., I wonder whether I should take all this with a grain of salt or a chunk of chocolate.

HERE IS A NEW TWIST to an old story. I found this in the *Web edition of the National Post*. It's about a boy and a girl in New Mexico who fall in love and want to live happily ever after. But the girl becomes pregnant and that makes the boy angry. After all, the sex was just for fun, and she was on the pill, wasn't she? Boy sends Girl away and sues her for "intentionally acquiring and misusing his semen."

This is the logical consequence of the all-too-common practice of buying and selling sperm. Although the sale of other human tissues and organs is quite controversial, for most people the sale of sperm raises little more than an eyebrow, if that.

The very "seeds" of life can be handed over for cash and clinics charge huge sums to inseminate women with anonymous donor sperm. So, if sperm is saleable "property" it carries the right of ownership and the right to dispose of it and use it as one wishes. If sex is "play" with no consequences, and semen is property to be bought and sold, it follows that the product of conception has little value; thus abortion-on-demand is the logical consequence.

***THE ECONOMIST* HAD** a special year-end double issue. In it was a five-page article on depression, to which the editor gave as subtitle "The Spirit of the Age," and as a headline: "Malignant Sadness Is the World's Great Hidden Burden."

It states that 330 million people around the world suffer from this affliction, more than those suffering from heart disease. Even then, most cases are not diagnosed. It says that depression is a disease like any other: something in the outside world affects some aspect of the body's make-up, and, where in cancer it is growth that goes awry, in depression it is feeling that runs amok. As a cancer is a malignant growth, so depression is a malignant sadness. Tumors can be seen and scanned, but malignant sadness can only be felt. Suicide and depression go together.

The World Health Organization (WHO) calls it a disease of modernity, due to the stresses of constant change and a growing number of lonely elderly. WHO estimates that depression is the fourth leading cause of death and disability, claiming 800,000 fatalities yearly worldwide.

***THE ECONOMIST* WOULD NOT** be a financial paper if it were not to consider the financial consequences. "Whether countries fuss about depression or not, it still costs a lot. Estimates by Ernst Berndt and his colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) put the annual cost of depression in America at $44 billion, as much as coronary heart disease. This amounts to roughly $6,000 for each depressed worker, with employers paying 70 per cent of the bill."

Not so many years ago grieving the loss of a loved one was a recognized and long process: people even had black armbands or dressed in black. Today such grief gets short shrift and is generally treated with drugs. Says *The Economist*:"If you agree that grief is essential to recover from bereavement, then drugging people back to contentment is scarcely a solution."

But because drugs are a lot cheaper than psychotherapy, pills are in and drug companies are thriving on depression. Concludes the article:"A disease of the mind cannot be cured with chemicals alone; attitudes must change too."

THIS HAS BECOME QUITE a "health column." Here is something I found in the *Globe and Mail*: "Some patients recovering from back surgery are being advised to drink wine and eat garlic, after a study in a Danish hospital showed that patients recovered faster on these unconventional products. Apparently both wine and garlic combat hardening of the arteries and allow blood to circulate more freely through the system. I imagine this would apply to any operation.

THE LAST YEAR BEFORE the new millennium will bring a lot of predictions, and predictions are almost always wrong. Consider the past two decades. Economic forecasters in 1979 were dead wrong when they said that in the 1980s the debate would not be whether oil prices would rise, but how far and how fast. Today they are the lowest in history, adjusted for inflation.

In 1989 the crystal ball gazers saw Japan as the economic model and power for the 1990s. They saw the Japanese as the real innovators. Well, the Tokyo stock market is down by 60 per cent and Japan is in a severe recession.

For predictions we might as well look at astrology. Here is what Nikki of Toronto, Psychic to the Stars, predicts for 1999: (1) A tidal wave will hit New York; (2) Stars in Hollywood will flock to Arizona because of catastrophic events and bad weather conditions in California; (3) An earthquake on the 24th of any month will hit Los Angeles (this month we hope to be there on the 24th of January, visiting our daughter and family); (4) There's going to be a goldrush north of Alberta in the Northwest Territories. Gold will be hot again; (5) Cigarette holders for women will be big, and so will French poodles; (6) There will be a funeral in the Royal Family and a sensational sex scandal in British Parliament involving the Spice Girls or a British actor or actress. This could involve Prime Minister Tony Blair or the Royal Family.

These are but a few of the events Nikki sees in the stars for 1999.

Bert Hielema predicts that people will keep on predicting things that will not happen. He lives in Tweed, Ont.

van der Woerd
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Classifieds

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We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. Please enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

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Births

GEERLINKS:

With joy and thanksgiving to our Lord, Randy, Lisa (nee Scholten), joyfully announce the long awaited arrival of our first child, a daughter,

ALEXANDRA PAIGE

weighing 9 lbs., 3 oz., born on Dec. 19, 1998, in Stratford, Ont.

She is the first grandchild for Jack and Theresa Scholten, the 14th grandchild for Bert and Grace Geerlinks. She is the first great-grandchild for Bert and Alice Van Gyssel and another great-grandchild for Jane Drost and Karen Scholten.

Home address: P.O. Box 194, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0

Birthdays

BURGLER:

Congratulations to Janna Burgler on her 80th birthday!

1919 January 7 1999

With joy and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, we wish to announce the 80th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

JANNA BURGLER
(nee SPANNINGA)

With love from your children:
Klaas & Hammie Holman — Mt. Brydges, Ont.
Casey & Kathy Burgler — Orangeville, Ont.
Tina & Klaas Donkersgoed — Listowel, Ont.
Willy Burgler — Saskatoon, Sask.
Henk Burgler & Irene (friend) — Listowel, Ont.
Rita & John Donkersgoed — Listowel Ont.
Charles & Joan Burgler — Alliston, Ont.
Harry & Lori Burgler — Stayner, Ont.
Cathy & Jake Raben — Moorefield, Ont.
Helen & Delio Aguiar — Listowel, Ont.
Tony Burgler — Tottenham, Ont.
And grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Open house was held on Jan. 9, at the Chr. Ref. Church in Listowel, Ont.

Address: 753 Richmond Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 2Z8

Births

BOOTSMA/NEUTEL:

With awe and thanksgiving to God for his miraculous gift, we, Ted and Corrie Bootsma and Walter and Ineke Neutel, joyfully announce the birth of a healthy granddaughter

EMILY CADENCE

born to Joel and Rebecca Bootsma on Dec. 29, 1998, in Toronto, Ont., weighing 8 lbs., 4 oz.

Emily is the first grandchild for Walter and Ineke Neutel and seventh grandchild for Ted and Corrie Bootsma.

Emily lives at 166 Homewood Ave., North York, ON M2M 1K5

Thank You

KOOISTRA:

We thank our children, the Waterloo Chr. Ref. Church, and all our friends for making our anniversaries in marriage and ministry unforgettable by their love as expressed in congratulations, best wishes, cards and flowers. Above all we thank the Lord, giver of all good things, for the privilege of this celebration.

Janette and Rem Kooistra.

Anniversaries

1959 January 22 1999

BERT and TINI HUIZING

With glory and praise to our Lord we celebrate your 40th anniversary Mom and Dad!

"If your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here" (Ex. 33:15).

Congratulations Mom and Dad! We love you!

Love, your children and grandchildren:
Chris & Diana
Joel, Amanda, Kari, Daniel
Phil & Karen
Nicole, Megan, Rebecca
Howard & Joanne
Joy & Bart
Leah, Bethany, Luke
Marlene & Andreas

Leeuwarden, Fr. Welland
the Neth. Ont.
1949 February 2 1999

It is with thankfulness to the Lord, for the many blessings he has given our family, that we, the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, may celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of

JOHANNES and JANKE VANDER VEEN
(nee MOOK)

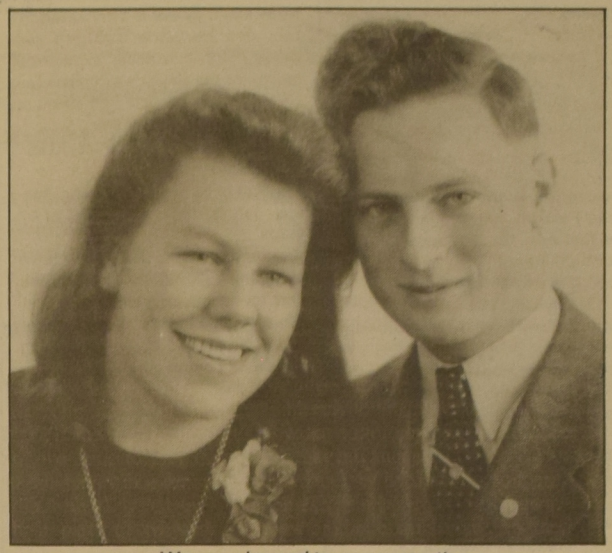
Wedding text: Matthew 6:34.

All our love from your children:
Gerda & Alan Earl
Jeff, Lori & Chris, Keith & Louise (Derek, Joshua), Steven, Lisa
Hank & Betty Vander Veen
John & Cathy, Scott & Alana
Anne & Dominic Grande
Pamela, Michael, Danny, Angela
John & MaryAnne Vander Veen
Karen, Eric, David
Jake & Diane Vander Veen
Daryl
Nancy Vander Veen & Todd Harvey
Janie, Aaron, Ashley & Jimmy
Beverly & Ron Kiers
Kelsey, Kayla
Angela & Don Williams
Dennis, Kristen
Martin Vander Veen

Open house will be held on Saturday, Jan. 30, 1999, from 2 - 4 p.m., at Grace Chr. Ref. Church, 660 South Pelham St., Welland, Ont. Best wishes only.

Home address: 46 Northgate Drive, Welland, ON L3C 5Y4

Anniversaries



We are pleased to announce the
50th wedding anniversary of
WILLIAM and MARGARET GRIN
January 4, 1999
Best wishes for continued happiness from children, grandchildren and their families.
To many more years together.
Address: 134 John Street, Chatham, ON N7M 5C1

Obituaries

Brampton, Ont. Guelph, Ont.
Sept. 20, 1981 - Dec. 25, 1998

"Look He comes with the clouds of heaven and every one will see Him — even those who pierced Him and all the nations of the earth will weep because of Him. Yes! Amen!" (Rev. 1:7).

On Christmas morning, after a seven month struggle with cancer, the Lord called home, peacefully in his sleep,

DAVID GARETT BARTEN

Dear son of Klare and Maria.
Brother of:
Michelle & William Bronsema
Jeffrey
Karen
Julie
Grandson of Gerrit and Andrea Barten of Brampton, Ont., and Jeanette and the late Cornelis Kuyvenhoven of the Netherlands.

The funeral service was held on Monday, Dec. 28, 1998, at First Chr. Ref. Church, Guelph, Ont.

Interment at Woodlawn Cemetery, Guelph, Ont.

Correspondence address:
K. Barten, 241 West Acres Drive, Guelph, ON N1H 7N9

Our new e-mail address:
ccadpromo@aol.com

Obituaries

Unexpectedly

CORNELIS GERHARDUS (BOB) BENCKHUYSEN

passed away in the morning of Dec. 29, 1998.

Loving husband of Mary.

Loving father and Opa of:
Robert Benckhuysen
(deceased 1952)
Elisabeth Paradis
Robert, Johanna, Eric, Martin
Daphne Benckhuysen
(deceased 1964)
Johanna & Youichi Motoi
Maya
Henry & Pamela Benckhuysen
Catherine & John Vedder
Natasha, Daniel
Grace & Patrick Pidduck
Samantha, Lisa, Thomas, Emily
Paul Benckhuysen
Joshua

Dear brother and brother-in-law of Justus and Louise Benckhuysen and Hugo and Agnes Stibbe and brothers and sisters in the Netherlands.

Personal

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Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7

Classifieds

Obituaries

Papekop, Z.H. Grimsby
the Neth. Ont.
April 19, 1920 - Jan. 6, 1999
JOB HOGEVEEN
was taken home to be with the Lord, after a lengthy illness, in his 79th year.
John 14:27
Beloved husband of Antje (Anne) (nee Politiek), and predeceased by his first wife, Maria (Verwey), 1972.
Loving father of:
John & Marvelis Hogeveen — Grimsby, Ont.
Corry & Tony Batenburg — Grimsby, Ont.
Bill & Corinne Hogeveen — Kincardine, Ont.
Marjo & Len Hovestadt — Brantford, Ont.
Dear stepfather of:
Nick & Maria Smidts — Woodstock, Ont.
Ray Smidts (deceased 1988) & Wendy — Stratford, Ont.
John & Karen Smidts — Stratford, Ont.
Jack & Marge Smidts — Canfield, Ont.
Cherished grandfather of 23 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.
Sadly missed by one sister, Janny Schreuder, and several brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law in the Netherlands.
Job was a retired automechanic and former owner and operator of Grimsby Toyota.
Funeral service was held on Jan. 9, 1999, from the Mountainview Chr Ref. Church, Grimsby, Ont., pastors J.W. Van Weelden and J.J. Hoytema officiating.
Correspondence address:
Mrs. Job Hogeveen, 23 Karen Cres., Grimsby, ON L3M 2E3

De Lier Grimsby
the Neth. Ont.
April 9, 1908 - Dec. 26, 1998
"I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth" (Ps. 121).
ABRAHAM KOK
Beloved husband of Jannetje Vrijland, went to be with the Lord on Saturday, Dec. 26, 1998.
We praise God that on Nov. 12, 1998, Mom and Dad were able to celebrate their 68th wedding anniversary.
Dear father of:
Dirk & Gerda Kok — St. Catharines
Andre & Jenny Kok — Niagara-on-the-Lake
Lena & Richard Vanatte — St. Catharines
Brian & Marie Cook — Niagara Falls
Jane & Peter deVisser — Mississauga
Loving grandfather of 21 grandchildren and 43 great-grandchildren.
Funeral services were held on Tuesday, Dec. 29, 1998, at Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont., Pastor W. Vanderwerf and Pastor G. Van Arragon led the service.
Correspondence address:
Mrs. J. Kok, Shalom Manor, 12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5

Nooit kan 't geloof te veel verwachten, des Heilands woorden zijn gewis (Faith can never expect too much, for the Savior's promises are certain.) This was the confession of our father and grandfather
MR. HARM JAN (HERMAN) KITS
of Red Deer, Alta.
He went to be with the Lord on Sunday, Jan. 3, 1999, at the age of 97 years.
We are thankful that we could have our father, grandfather, and great-Opa for such a long time.
We also give thanks to the Lord for all the blessings He gave us through our dad, opa and great-Opa.
His children:
Helga Kits — The Hague, the Neth.
Jakob & Penny Kits — Edmonton
Pearl DeJonge — Red Deer
Helen Kits — Lacombe
Jenny & Ed Veuger — Duncan
Clarence & Doreen Kits — Lacombe
Swancie & Jack Soley — Red Deer
Kor Kits — High River
Teena & John Van 't Land — Lethbridge
his 30 grandchildren and 53 great-grandchildren.
Harm was predeceased by his daughter, Trijntje, in 1942; granddaughter, Jacquelyn, in 1964; his first wife for 48 years, Luiktje (Linda) Renkema, in 1976; son-in-law, Arie DeJonge, in 1977; great-grandson, Jonathan, in 1987; his second wife for 13 years, Anna Maria Jagt, in 1991: and by two sons, Uilke "Uk," in 1993, and Jan "John" in 1997.
Funeral services were held at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Red Deer, Alta., on Jan. 8, 1999, Rev. James Pot officiating. Interment took place in the Red Deer Cemetery.

Ter Aar Owen Scund
the Neth. Ont.
Dec. 1, 1901 - Dec. 30, 1998
"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:26).
After a long and good life her Lord took to Himself our dear and caring mother, grandmother and great-grandmother
ANNIGJE VANEYK - HEYNS
widow of Bartholomeus Heyns since Nov. 21, 1974.
Bill & Coby Heyns — Owen Sound, Ont.
Annie & Henk VanDyk — Surrey, B.C.
Harry & Anna Heyns — Allenford, Ont.
Agnes & Garry VanRenselaar — Brandon, Man.
Dikkie & Kees Klaver — Stratford, Ont.
Betty & John Pijl — Niagara Falls, Ont.
33 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren.
Predeceased by her seven brothers and three sisters in the Netherlands.
Funeral service was conducted at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Owen Sound, Ont., on Monday, Jan. 4, 1999.
"The gift of God is eternal life" (Rom. 6:23).
Correspondence address:
Bill Heyns, 350 23rd St. W., Owen Sound, ON N4K 4G7

Gramsbergen Lacombe
Ov., the Neth. Alta.
Oct. 21, 1909 - Dec. 24, 1998
HENRY A. SALOMONS
was suddenly taken to his eternal rest.
Preceded in death by his wife Gay Brouwer (1977).
Parents: Jan Salomons and Rolena Feddes, sisters, Aaltje and Tena (Gerben) Wynia, brothers, Herman and John.
Sadly missed by his wife Renee Bruinsma.
Daughters:
Ruth & Kees Krabbe
Rose & John Salomons
Gaylene, Mike & Maguy, Mark
JoAnn & Bill Sommerfeld
Son:
Gordon
Stepchildren:
George
John
Herman & Ena
Ralph & Jane
Andrew & Loretta
Pearl & Cor Nienhuis
Gay & William Thurner
Joanne & Ron Huisman
24 step-grandchildren and 24 step-great-grandchildren.
Brother Bill (Grace Salomons), sisters-in-law, Annie and Theresa Salomons, nephews, nieces and the Brouwer family.
Henry immigrated with his family from Nieuwlande, Dr., the Neth., to Shackleton, Sask., in 1925 and during the depression they moved to Lacombe, Alta., where for many years he was the proprietor of the Beaver Hardware until his retirement in 1973.
Funeral services were held in Bethel Lacombe Chr. Ref. Church, and interment in Woody Nook.
Correspondence address:
Ruth Krabbe, 3211 Canmore Rd. NW, Calgary, AB T2M 4J8

AREND SCHIPPER
of Caressant Care, Bonnie Place, St. Thomas, Ont., and formerly of Wallacetown, Ont., went to be with his Lord on Sunday, Jan. 10, 1999, in his 92nd year.
Beloved husband of the late Jantje (te Strake) Schipper (1986) and dearly loved father of:
Willy & Sandy Van Dorp — Clinton, Ont.
Grace & Gary Van Dorp — Burdette, Alta.
Ben & Johanna Schipper — Wallacetown, Ont.
Ed & Atty Schipper — Neustadt, Ont.
Ria & Rudy Bouius — St. Thomas, Ont.
Joanne & Len Newell — Abbotsville, B.C.
Jane & John Andrews — St. Thomas, Ont.
Predeceased by two brothers and one sister in the Netherlands.
Arend is also fondly remembered by 31 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.

Engelum, Fr. Brampton
the Neth. Ont.
July 5, 1909 - Dec. 28, 1998
"Be glad when that happens and dance for joy, because a great reward is kept for you in heaven" (Luke 6:32).
God graciously took home his child
LIEUWE WASSENAAR
Dear husband of Maartje Wassenaar-Boersma for 66 years.
We are forever grateful for his dedication and love.
Andy (deceased 1995) & Emmy Wassenaar — Sarnia
Siek & Tina Wassenaar — Stouffville
Vivian & Klaas De Jong — Wyoming
Sy & Mary Wassenaar — Toronto
Kathy Wassenaar — (deceased 1968)
Willem & Rosemary Wassenaar — Toronto
Tina Wassenaar — Toronto
18 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.
A memorial service was held on Dec. 30, 1998, at Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont.
Interment took place at the Lakeview Cemetery in Sarnia, Ont., on Dec. 31, 1998, Rev. DeJager officiating.
Correspondence address: M. Wassenaar, Apt. C1101, Holland Christian Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

Balk Oshawa
the Neth. Ont.
April 13, 1917 - Dec. 29, 1998
On Tuesday, Dec. 29, 1998, the Lord called home our father, grandfather and great-grandfather
BEREND (BARNEY) SCHOON
at the Lakeridge Health Centre in Oshawa, Ont.
Predeceased by his wife Elisabeth in July 1988.
Loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather of:
Jack & Linda Schoon — Toronto, Ont.
Andrea
Tena & Morris deWolde — High River, Alta.
Rick, Bob, Liza, Darryl & Cori (Jason, Mitchell, Dylan)
Richard & Jacqui Schoon — Burnaby, B.C.
Jeanette, Brent, Jesse, Alexandra, Keefer
Spike & Marina Schoon — Okotoks, Alta.
Kim, Doug, Jeff
Harry & Ann Schoon — Oshawa, Ont.
Keith, David, Steven
His brother John and Jannie Schoon, Cobourg, Ont., and Hinke, Jeltje, Sipke, Sjoerd, Maije, Jacob, in the Netherlands.
The burial and funeral service was held on Jan. 2, 1999, in Zion Chr. Ref. Church, Oshawa, Ont., Rev. Arian Koppendrayer officiated and preached on Psalm 23.
Correspondence address: Tena deWolde, 521 Lineham Acres Drive NW, High River, AB T1V 1T3

Miscellaneous

Dutch family in IJsselstein (province of Utrecht, the Neth.) would like a **housing exchange** with a **family in Ontario** (between Brampton and Waterloo) during the **summer months of 1999**, so we can visit and vacation. **Contact: Fam. M. Vaartjes, Parelpad 9, 3402 ZE IJSSELSTEIN, the Netherlands. Phone: 011-31-30-6884286.**

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Teachers

PRINCIPAL
PORT PERRY, Ont.: Scugog Chr. School is searching for a **teaching principal** to lead an interdenominational school. The school has a present enrolment of 77 students from JK-8 with 35 families and is situated in an exceptional community. Job commences Aug. 1, 1999. Send your resume, with a statement of faith and your philosophy of education, to:
Principal Search Committee
Scugog Chr. School
P.O. Box 3308
Prince Albert, ON L9L 1C3
For info. call Mike McLaren at (905) 985-0948 (work)

PETERBOROUGH, Ont.: Rhema Christian School invites applications for a **maternity leave teaching position beginning in mid-March of 1999**. Applicants need to be qualified teachers and demonstrate a love for God, a love for students and love for teaching. If you are a qualified Christian teacher, interested in joining our dynamic Christian staff, please send a resume to:
Mr. Ray Hendriks, Principal
3195 Parkhill Rd. E.
Peterborough, ON K9L 1B8
Fax: (705) 743-1415

MERRITT, B.C.: Maranatha Chr. School, 2990 Voght St., Merritt, BC V1K 1C8, is inviting applications for **Principal/Administrator**. MCS is a Group 1 school, K to 10 of 50 plus students. Closing date is Jan. 31, 1999. For information call **(250) 378-2626 or (250) 378-2176** afternoons or evenings.

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

Elementary Principal Position

Abbotsford Chr. School, a multi-denominational school system, is inviting applications for a possible opening for an **elementary (K-7) principal** at the Heritage Campus.

ACS serves over 1200 students at 2 elementary campuses and 1 secondary campus. Each campus has a leadership team consisting of a principal and two assistant principals. The principal is responsible for the overall educational and administrative leadership of the campus. The principal also functions as part of our administrative team (3 campus principals, director of operations and director of development) to provide leadership to our school system.

We are looking for an experienced and enthusiastic leader who is deeply committed to Christian education and is excited about working as part of a leadership team. Application deadline: **Feb. 5, 1999.** Please direct resumes or inquiries to:

Ed Noot, Principal
Abbotsford Chr. School — Clayburn Hills Campus
3939 Old Clayburn Road, Abbotsford, BC V3G 1J9
Phone (604) 850-2694/Fax (604) 850-7075
E-mail: enoot@uniserve.com

Full-time Administrative Position

Alliston Community Chr. School, Alliston, Ont., is searching for a full-time, experienced teaching principal to lead a growing interdenominational school. The school has a present enrollment of 82 students from JK-8 with 47 supporting families and is situated in a rapidly expanding community. Job commences **Aug. 1, 1999**, optional 80 per cent position negotiable. Please send resumes to:

Harry Zantingh
22 Downey Avenue, Alliston, ON L9R 1J7
(705) 435-5858/(705) 435-9212
mikel.jans@sympatico.ca

PRINCIPAL

Ponoka Chr. School is seeking applications for a **teaching principal** for the school year beginning **September 1999.** Ponoka Chr. School with an enrollment of approx. 90 students in ECS to Grade 9, is located in the beautiful Parkland area of Alberta in the Edmonton-Calgary corridor. Information package available. Please respond to **Mrs. E.C. Land, (403) 783-6563.** Application deadline: **Jan. 15, 1999.**

Part-time Youth Director

Providence Chr. Ref. Church in Beamsville, Ont., is seeking a part-time **Youth Director** (non-ordained). The primary focus of this position is working with our Sr. Teen Ministry (14 to 18 age group). A complete job description is available upon request.

Application deadline is Feb. 15, 1999. Send resume to **Youth Ministry Committee, c/o Wilma VanderMey, 615 Sobie Rd., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2. Phone: (905) 563-5139/Fax: (905) 563-8482.**

Job Opportunities

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- 3-5 years management experience including personnel management and multi-disciplinary team co-ordination (the administrator is currently responsible for co-ordination of a site based home care contract).
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to work in a very caring environment.
- Ability to speak the Dutch language is an asset.

Interested candidates, please send your resume by **Feb. 5, 1999**, to:

Mr. Jack Snaterse, Board Chairman Emmanuel Home
13425-57 Street, Edmonton, AB T5A 2G1
Phone: (403) 478-2051/Fax: (403) 473-0970

We thank all applicants for applying but we will only be responding to candidates under consideration. All resumes are accepted in strict confidence. Thank you.

Miscellaneous

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For more information, call Desmond Wall at (905) 544-0197.

Classis Eastern Canada

Students from Classis Eastern Canada who are planning to prepare for full-time ministry in the CRC and who are in need of **financial help for the 1999-2000 school year**, are kindly invited to contact the Student Fund Committee:

c/o Mr. James Kooistra, R.R. 1, Williamsburg, ON K0C 2H0. Please apply before March 1, 1999. Phone/Fax (613) 535-2152 or e-mail: jkooistra@mor-net.on.ca

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Obituaries

"In my Fathers house there are many rooms" (Ps.111

Bussum, The Neth. — Toronto, Ont.

1910 - 1998

The Lord took home
ALEIDA BRANDS MOL
on December 2, 1998.

Allieda was married to Marten Mol Sr., who passed away March 1977 while realizing his founding vision of Holland Christian Homes Inc., where his mother-in-law, Nies Brands, and now his wife, Aleida Brands Mol, were taken home. Holland Christian Homes became a special place for Aleida, and as a family we thank the staff and nursing care for their dedication, love and many gifts of understanding. Both Aleida and Marten gave much of their time to the church and to many Dutch-Canadian immigrants that passed through Toronto and surrounding communities. At this time we thank everyone that at one time or another touched their lives in The Netherlands, Australia and Canada.

Aleida Mol leaves behind a sister, Christine Wonder, and her children:

John & Maureen Fieldwick Mol — Mississauga;
Jake & Pauline Holancin-Mol — Aurora
Pieter & Nancy Mol Cahais — Bramalea
Marten & Anne Oussoren-Mol — Aurora.

Grandchildren : Shelly, Bradly, Margaret, Adelaide, Martin, Richard, Edward, Yolanda, Marten-Kevin, Allison.

Great-grandchildren: Natasia, Amanda, Joshua, Elana, Pieter, Benjamin, John, David, Daren, Stephany, Kayla, Leigh, Michael, Joshua.

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Classifieds

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Events

Wallaceburg Christian Reformed Church

with joy and gratitude, invites you to an
Open House
for their new church building on
Saturday, February 6, 1999
Schedule:
Open House — 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Dedication Service — 1:30 - 2:00 p.m.
Open House — 2:00 - 4 p.m.
Choir Concert — 7 p.m.
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Miscellaneous

the Netherlands

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Miscellaneous

CANCEL

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Miscellaneous

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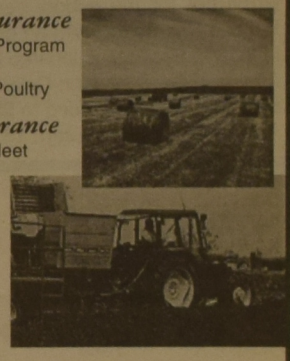

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Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Feb. 6 Open House, Wallaceburg CRC, **Wallaceburg**, Ont., to dedicated their new church building. Open house 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m, dedication service 1:30 - 2:00 p.m., open house 2 - 4 p.m., choir concert 7 p.m. Address: 150 Bruinsma Avenue, Wallaceburg.

Flights

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Job Opportunities

Youth Position Available

East Chr. Ref. Church of Strathroy, Ont., is seeking to fill a newly established full-time position of Youth Director. Those who have a sense of calling and passion in this strategic ministry and are committed to a confessionally Reformed perspective may direct their resume and/or inquiries to:

Rich Hamstra, Youth Search Committee, East Chr. Ref. Church, 476 Metcalfe St. East, Strathroy, ON N7G 1R5.

Phone: (519) 245-1715.

Thinkbit

"One thing attained with difficulty is better than a hundred procured with ease."

The Talmud

It was nice of Beth to let him win

Art White

Scott Kishbaugh's IQ is twice that of his older sister, Beth. She never finished regular grade school; he was just 23 when he completed the requirements for his Masters in environmental engineering from Cornell University. Scott is gifted. Beth is retarded.

On a rainy Thanksgiving Day when they were children, Scott and Beth were playing "Spite and Malice" with other family members, including their Aunt Polly, an avid card-player.

It had not been a good day for young Scott, the sensitive last-born child, whose older sisters and brother had won their own (and his) share of every game that afternoon. More than once he threw his hands up or banged the table when another player won. More than once his green eyes glistened with dashed hopes and heart-sinking defeat.

Spite and Malice is a variety of solitaire (two players, two decks), the object of which is to use all 26 cards from your "playoff pack" while preventing the other player from doing the same. Some players take as much delight in blocking their "opponents" as they do in winning, which is where the game gets its name.

Aunt Polly was kibitzing during their game. She noticed that Beth missed playing a card from her hand which could have blocked Scott. Beth picked up and said, "Your turn, Scott." A few minutes later, Polly watched Beth overlook another card which would have allowed her to play from her own pack. "Your turn, Scott."

Polly was amazed. Beth certainly had limitations elsewhere in life, but in this card game she was a whiz! She knew the rules and delighted in the game for its own sake. It wasn't like Beth to "mis-play" like this.

"Your turn, Scott." She did it again! Polly was puzzled and fascinated.

Eventually, Scott won. It perked up his spirits, brought a big smile and allowed him to enjoy the rest of that Day of Thanksgiving.

Later, Polly had a chance to talk to her niece alone. "You let Scott win, didn't you Beth?"

"Y-yes."

"Why did you let him win like that?"

"He was s-s-sad cause he was l-l-losing, Aunt Polly. S-scott likes to win...."

"It was nice of you to let him win, Beth."

"Yes."

"I wish you'd let me win once in a while," said Polly with a mock pout on her face.

"S-s-sometimes I do...."

Fifteen years later Scott Kishbaugh wrote these words of appreciation about Beth on the dedication page of his Master's thesis: ".... I would also like to dedicate my thesis to my big sister, Beth, who has taught me the most valuable lesson I could ever learn. Fame and fortune are great, but the best thing about life is life itself. It exists for its own sake and is good. The joy and privilege of love and life itself trivializes other values. I pray that I'll always follow her valuable lesson: she lives it every day."

Art White is a freelance writer who lives in Clementsvale, N.S.

FROM COAST TO COAST

Back to God Hour: English Radio:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan - CKAY.....10:00am 1500
Burns Lake-CFLD.....9:15am 1400
Osoyoos-CJOR.....8:00am 1490
Penticton-CKOR.....8:00am 800
Port Alberni-CJAV.....7:00pm 1240
Prince George-CIRX...7:00am 94.3
Princeton-CHOR.....8:00am 1400
Smithers-CFBV.....9:15am 1230
Summerland-CHOR.....8:00am 1450
Vernon-CJIB.....9:30pm 940

QUEBEC

Montreal - CIQC.....7:30am 600

ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBQ.....8:00am 1340
Ft. McMurray-CJOK....8:30am 1230
High River-CHRB.....6:30pm 1280
Edmonton - CKER....11:00pm 101.9
Westlock-CFOK.....7:30am 1370

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL.....8:00am 1280
Weyburn-CFSL.....8:00am 1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM.....9:30am 950
Steinbach-CHSM.....9:30am 1250
Winnipeg-CKJS.....9:15am 810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK.....9:30am 1240
Chatham-CFCO.....6:30am 630
Fort Frances-CFOB.....9:30am 640
Guelph - CJOY.....8:30am 1460
Hamilton-CHAM.....7:30am 820
Kapuskasing-CKAP.....7:00am 580
Kingston-WLKC.....7:30am 100.7
Newmarket- CKDX.....9:30am 88.5
Oshawa-CKDO.....8:00am 1350
Owen Sound-CFOS.....10:30am 560
Pembroke-CHVR.....10:00am 96.7
Sarnia-CHOK.....7:30am 1070
Stratford-CJCS.....8:45am 1240
Windsor-CKLW.....8:30am 580
Wingham-CKNX.....10:30am 920

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ.....9:30am 700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY...7:00am 630

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY.....6:00am 1420
Kentville-CKEN.....8:30am 1490
Middleton-CKAD.....8:30am 1350
New Glasgow-CKEC...7:30am 1320
Weymouth-CKDY.....8:30am 103.1
Windsor-CFAB.....8:30am 1450
Sydney-CJCB.....8:00 am 1270

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Nfld., N.B., N.S. & P.E.I.. 8:00 & 11:00pm

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

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Third-World people oppose Western notion of peace

ELKHART, Ind. (EPH) – People who live in developing nations resent the Western call for "peace on earth," according to seminary professor Perry B. Yoder. They see the end of conflict as a middle-class luxury that North Americans desire because "we benefit from the peace of the status quo."

In his book entitled *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice and Peace*, Professor Yoder explains that Third-World people may resort to terrorism because other people use military force to maintain control over them. "The military supports, directly aids and profits from a system which causes small farmers to lose land, livelihood for support of family, and even life itself," Yoder writes. "Who in this situation is responsible for violence?" Professor Yoder says that Western Christians seem more willing to preach peace to these victims of violence rather than to the tyrants who oppress them.

Yoder's study grows out of his own experience of living in the Philippines from 1984 to 1985. There he found that Christians often aligned themselves with powerful business owners and government officials who used torture to intimidate their opponents. Some Christians supported these rulers' call for "peace and stability," even though it meant continued oppression of the poor.

Professor Yoder explores the theme of peace in biblical times. He finds that the Bible's teaching on peace is rooted in the concept of a just society.

For example, he traces how the ancient Israelites changed their society from being a kinship community to a nation state. King Solomon imposed heavy taxes to support a standing army. Consequently, small farmers lost their land. Rich landlords consolidated their holdings and hired dispossessed people at starvation wages to gather the crops for them.

"This notion of the land as a resource of production for the support of someone who did not live on the land but profited from the work" is what Yoder calls the "wealth economy." He believes Christians must oppose any wealth economy that oppresses people to benefit a privileged few.

"It is clear that rulers have special responsibility to do right because of their power and privilege," he writes. "They will be judged strictly on their exercise of power for the benefit of those need justice. As a result, oppression can never be justified in the name of the state. Indeed, it is a travesty to invoke the Bible in support of state oppression. It teaches just the opposite – the state is for good and justice."

Professor Yoder teaches Old Testament at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

African churches need help to cope with AIDS

Dan Wooding

WHEATON, Il.— Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief, the national assistance arm of the (American) National Association of Evangelicals, has issued an urgent appeal for North American Christians and churches to "open their eyes" and get behind the efforts of African churches to help those dying from AIDS.

Calver made his impassioned appeal after nearly a month of meetings with African church leaders and people dying from AIDS, in which he conducted urgent discussions about the HIV/AIDS epidemic that is sweeping through Africa at a horrifying pace.

On his return to the United States, Calver pointed out that 12 million Africans have already died as a result of AIDS. "Out of the 33 million people worldwide now infected with the HIV virus, 22 million are in Africa, according to statistics recently released by United Nations," he said. "In four African countries alone, 20 to 25 per cent of the adult population is infected. It approaches the magnitude of the medieval Black Death."

Calver went on to say, "The churches in Africa that are doing a fantastic AIDS work feel isolated and desperately need our help, support and prayers at this time. They need the support of the Western church because the enormity of the problem overwhelms the churches that have few resources to care for the orphans and those too sick to work. I believe it is the role of the church to care for the dying and those that are left behind.

"We must get involved now, before it is too late!"

AIDS is in the church

Calver believes the African church is the only hope for Africa because of its infrastructure and position on sexual morality, yet the church in the West is ambivalent about supporting it in this area. "We've got to empower African churches to run programs of care and prevention," he says. "AIDS care and prevention must be done together because it's only by doing the first that the right is earned to do the second. And we've got to provide the resources so that they can accomplish this."

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES

"I believe it is the role of the church to care for the dying and those that are left behind," contends Dr. Calver.

In Malawi, three of the most senior church leaders acknowledged to Calver that they had AIDS-related deaths in their families, and each of them spoke of how salvation had come in the context of that situation.

Calver, who was accompanied by his wife, Ruth, met with a number of HIV-infected people who have met Jesus and are now bringing others to faith in Christ, but still their pain is obvious.

He said that one young Rwandan woman he met with in Kigali was one of thousands who had been raped during the 1994 genocide, during which many contracted HIV. "She lost her husband during the genocide and was then raped repeatedly in a refugee camp," he said. "She has no money, no hope apart from Christ, and yet lives with the reality of her suffering. A friend who was with us on the trip witnessed her tears — a rarity in Rwanda."

No longer depressed

Calver also spoke about them meeting Immaculate, a beautiful young woman who was married in 1990. "When the genocide broke out she was separated from her husband and has never seen him again," he said.

"When she tried to escape to Congo, she was put into a camp where she was raped repeatedly by soldiers. This is where she became infected with the AIDS virus.

"Immaculate has no living relatives — all were killed in the genocide. We discovered that God revealed himself to her through an HIV-AIDS fellowship. She said she is no longer depressed by the disease. 'God is the one who takes care of me know,' she said through her tears. 'If I had not accepted Christ, I would have committed suicide."

Immaculate said she is often rejected by people when they discover that she is HIV positive. World Relief gave Immaculate a small loan so she can sell vegetables at the local market and provide for herself.

Said Calver, "It's amazing to see the evangelistic opportunity created by the spread of the disease."

News Digest

Stupid fraud tricks

TORONTO (CP) – Bogus insurance claims make up as much as 15 per cent of all claims, according to the Canadian Coalition Against Insurance Fraud, a group working to stop people from ripping off insurance companies. Ann Walker, the group's spokesperson, has made a list of 1998's top 10 bogus insurance claims.

"Insurance fraud is always amazing to me, what people will do and the extent to which they will try to do it," says Walker. "I picked what I thought was a good balance of interesting, funny, bizarre and stupid fraud tricks."

One example is the case of the woman who hired a thief to make her car disappear. But he liked the car so much, he kept it, and was later caught driving a "stolen" vehicle.

Then there was the man who claimed his 21-foot boat was stolen from his locked garage, which was 18 feet long.

Hillsboro needs God

HILLSBORO, Ill. (religion today.com) — "The World Needs God," proclaims a sign in Hillsboro, Ill. Redemptive Assembly of God purchased the sign after a lawsuit forced its removal from a government building. The 12-foot, 400-pound sign had been on the side of a government building until 1994, when the American Civil Liberties Union sued to have it taken down. The church placed the sign on the side of its building and everyone entering the central Illinois town from the west can read it, United Press International said.

No more bad ads

LOS ANGELES (religiontoday.com) – The Los Angeles Times stopped accepting ads from adult clubs. The newspaper instituted a policy Dec. 1 of refusing ads from topless bars, clubs with nude dancing and live sex shows, massage parlors, and providers of hardcore pornography, *Advance* newsletter said. Times President and CEO Kathryn M. Downing is quoted as saying, "Everything we do at The Times carries with it the ultimate goal of improving the performance of society. I think this change in policy helps move us closer to that ideal."